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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

In Two Volumes

VOL. I

(WITH PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR)

THIRD EDITION

CASSELL AND COMPANY LIMITED

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE

1895

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To Bessie,

MY BELOVED WIFE,

AS OF HER RIGHT

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

The quality of gratitude should no more be strained than that of mercy. I hope that I am a grateful man, and that I never remembered an injury save to laugh at it, nor received a favour without doing my best to requite it. It is thus with, I hope, pardonable gratification that I express in this, the third edition of my "Life and Adventures," my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Sir Francis Clare Ford, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Rome—but for whose prompt and compassionate kindness there would be no G. A. S. to write fresh prefaces to any books of his, at all.

I was very ill during most of the time when I was writing, or I ought rather to say dictating, this work. I was scarcely convalescent when, at Christmastide, I left London for my annual holiday in the South. An accident on board the steamer in the Channel brought about a series of internal disturbances; and I reached Rome in a wretchedly feeble state. I went at once to the Ambassador, to whom I had letters from Lord Dufferin and Lord Rosebery. He laughed, and said that he had known me very well years ago. I was taking my leave of him at the head of the marble staircase, when everything turned black; then there was a flash of lightning, and I fell on the tesselated floor in a dead swoon. For some minutes they thought that I *was* dead. When I

came to myself I was in the arms of the *maître d'hôtel,* and the Ambassador was bathing my temples with vinegar. A physician and a nursing-sister swiftly made their appearance. I was put to bed at the Embassy, and tended with infinite care and solicitude; and it was only after a considerable time had elapsed that the Ambassador sent me back to the Hôtel d'Angleterre in his own carriage, well packed with wraps and hot-water bottles, and with Colonel Slade, the Military Attaché, to take care of me. I did not wish to be an intruder at the Embassy; and I knew that at the Angleterre I should receive precisely the same attention that I should have had in my own house. I have known some of the servants in this excellent hotel for five-and-twenty years. Throughout the long illness, or, rather, the three illnesses—for I was twice apparently convalescent—which afflicted me during my stay in Rome, I was infinitely solaced by constant telegrams and letters from my wife, who was prevented by sickness from joining me, telling me that my book was a success and had been favourably noticed in most of the great daily and weekly organs. Then came the even more welcome intelligence that a second edition had been issued; and now I am able, with a lighter heart than I have had for many months, to make a few prefatory remarks to the third edition.

On my return to England I found a number of letters awaiting me, in which some errors into which I had fallen were pointed out; and for the majority of these corrections I have to thank my old friend Archibald Forbes. It would be passing strange if a book of nearly nine hundred pages, written by a man of advanced age, who has never kept a regular diary,

were altogether free from mistakes, and I feel rather inclined to congratulate myself that the blunders I have fallen into are not very many and not very glaring. In Vol. II., page 36, please note that William Howard Russell preceded both Charles Mackay and Antonio Gallenga during the Civil War. Russell reached New York a month before the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Page 42: it was not in the Egyptian but in the later Soudan Campaign that General Earle was killed. Page 211: the name of the Commandant de Place at Metz, which had escaped my memory, was Caffinières. My friend Archibald Forbes has, I think, indulged in a little hypercriticism when he tells me that on the voyage to India in 1875 the steamer conveying the special correspondents did not follow in the wake of the *Serapis*, but preceded her by several days. Again, on page 125, where I write of "the famous four sergeants of the Indian Mutiny who blew up the Cashmere Gate of Delhi," I am told there were not four sergeants, and that the exploding party consisted of Lieutenants Howe and Salkeld, R.E.; Sergeants Carmichael, Burgess, and Smith, of the Bengal Sappers; and Bugler Hawthorn, of the 52nd Queen's. I gladly make the correction; but to have mistaken a bugler for a sergeant is surely not a hanging matter. Page 341: Mr. Pears, the *Daily News* correspondent, is an American and not an English barrister. And, lastly, the Christian name of my lamented friend Macgahan was not "Alexander," but "Januarius Aloysius."

I have not much more to say. One of the very few journals which have reviewed my book in downright abusive terms was good enough to remark that it was inordinately long. I can only reply that I could easily

have expanded it to at least six volumes; but had I proposed even a third volume, I am afraid that my publishers would have cried "Hold! enough." Glancing at the index, I find that I have said nothing of my kind friend the late Sir Arthur Helps; that I am silent with regard to Charles Kingsley, a most touching letter from whom I treasure; that I have failed to notice Sir Edgar Boehm and Sir Richard Burton, whom I knew intimately. I have left unchronicled a great many incidents in my life of greater importance perhaps than those upon which I have dwelt; but I have done my best, and the public have signified their approval in a very practical manner by demanding a third edition of my "Life and Adventures."

I have mentioned incidentally in my book that it has been my fortune to come into friendly contact with a good many individuals of high rank; but I said once for all that I had no mind to brag about the great personages I have known. I am a man of the people, and have always written for the people; but I hope I shall not be accused of vanity in saying that a copy of my work has been graciously accepted by the Prince of Wales, and that it has brought me the kindliest and cheeriest of letters from, among many others, the Marchioness of Salisbury, the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, the Earl of Rosebery, Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, and Mr. Gladstone.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

2, *Eastern Terrace, Brighton.*
Easter, 1895.

PREFACE.

In these days, when almost everybody appears to be burning with the desire to let all the world know what he has been doing from the time of his birth downwards, it is not quite an easy matter to determine what title should most appropriately be bestowed on a narrative of a long career. I venture to think that of such titles as "Reminiscences," "Memories of the Past," "Fifty Years (more or less) of My Life," "Looking Back," and so forth, we have had enough and to spare. A goodly number of my admired contemporaries, living and dead, have published their autobiographies; and to these they have attached appellations, some of which it is very possible that I should have chosen myself; but, after long consideration, I determined to give to these volumes the name under which they are now submitted to the public—namely, my "Life and Adventures."

As to the life, it has been mercifully prolonged to a period far more protracted than could reasonably be expected in the case of an individual who was a wretchedly sickly child, and who has led, in every sense of the term, the hardest of lives, in all kinds of climates, in most parts of the civilised world. Whether that life has been an adventurous one it must be left for my readers to determine. It is quite possible that I have unnecessarily amplified, to the extent of half-a-dozen pages, events which might well have been dismissed in as many lines; and that I have exaggerated beyond all rational measure things of very trifling moment. The only apology that I can make in this last respect is that I have written fully on subjects

which have interested me, and which continue still to present interest to my mind. You will remember that which the late General Fleury said when, being at the time French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, he received the intelligence that the Second Empire, of which, officially, he was the offspring, had hopelessly collapsed. His Excellency shrugged his shoulders, and, with a smile, observed: "*Et cependant, pendant dix-huit ans nous nous sommes diablement amusés.*"

I have had not a few dull moments during my life, and have had to pass through some periods of utter misery and seeming despair; but, on the whole, I can say that during the last sixty years I have found life much more amusing than dismal. I am no philosopher; but I believe that it is after a manner philosophical to laugh whenever you possibly are able to indulge in harmless merriment. I am not what is ordinarily called a "comic writer," and I should not be surprised if many of my brother authors, and more of my readers, have long set me down as the dullest of dull dogs; still I have found during the last two generations an infinity of things to laugh at, and now and again it may be that I have found people to laugh with me as well as at me.

This being confessedly an autobiography, the critics, I apprehend, will refrain from girding at me for the constant use of the personal pronoun "I." Some years ago I used to write in the columns of the *Illustrated London News* a page of gossip called "Echoes of the Week;" and as the paragraphs related to matters which had come under my individual observation, I was compelled to use the personal pronoun aforesaid; varying it occasionally with "the present writer," "your humble servant," and similar devices, which I can but consider to be of a mean and shuffling character. I remember once receiving a letter—anonymous, of course—in which the writer abused me violently for what he styled my

"shameless and wearisome egotism." "It is always I, I, I, I, I, I, with you," wrote this courteous scribe, "and everybody is heartily sick of you, you, you, you!" Now, I have a definite purpose in alluding to the bygone anonymous letter-writer and his vituperative epistle; because I wish to ask a question which, to the best of my knowledge and belief, has not yet been fully propounded to the world, and a conclusive answer to which would, I fancy, be a not unimportant contribution to the science of language. How is it that with one exception—at least, so far as I know—the English are the only people who, in the middle of a sentence write the personal pronoun "I" with a majuscule or capital letter? In the interior of a sentence the Frenchman writes "je," the Italian "io," the German "ich," the Spaniard "yo," the Greek "ego," and so on. Take the following passage from the "Margravine of Anspach":—

"After my amiable sister-in-law and her husband had left me, I found much pleasure in my rural amusements at my pavilion. I had cows and a fine dairy; the dairy was situated on the side of the court opposite the entrance-gate. One day, while I was standing there I perceived a Capuchin friar approaching, who, looking round, soon observed me, and advancing, addressed me, saying: 'Lady Craven, I presume?' On my answering that I was Lady Craven, he put his hand into his bosom, and showing me a letter, 'This I have brought,' he said, 'from your friend the Duchess de Villermosa. She has confided it to me, and I have brought it from Madrid, walking all the way, in order to deliver it into your own hands. I begged him to refresh himself, and inquired how he could guess that I was Lady Craven?"

It may be freely granted that the continually-repeated "I" is a typographical disfigurement, and there is one way in which it may be completely avoided. About half a century since there was an estimable Hebrew who was converted to Protestantism and took Anglican orders. We will say that his name was Cahn. He travelled in the East for a philanthropic purpose, and

wrote a most amusing account of his wanderings. I remember a paragraph in his book, somewhat in the following terms:—

"The sheikh of the village sent Cahn a roast kid, a skin of milk, and a jar of honey; but Cahn refused them. The local mollah offered to give up his house for Cahn's use; but Cahn declined. Why did Cahn decline? Because Cahn was an Ass."

Would you, dear reader, have liked me to write my "Life and Adventures" in the third person singular? Would it have suited your taste if you had come on such a sentence as the following:—"G. A. S.'s tailor sent him his bill, observing that it had been standing for a long time. G. A. S. replied, saying that he would discharge the account so soon as he had received remittances from his uncle at Celebes. Six months afterwards the tailor wrote again to say that he had not yet received a cheque from G. A. S. That cheque, however, was forwarded the next day. Why did G. A. S. send the cheque? Because G. A. S. was soft-hearted, and had just received a considerable sum of money from his publishers."

This obviously is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the stupidly malevolent outcry of ill-conditioned critics against writers whom they envy and whom they hate, because those writers choose to say what they have to say in their own fashion. In my youth I was acquainted with a musical composer of considerable culture but generally Bohemian tendencies, who was wont to boast that he could borrow half-a-crown in the Spenserian stanza. Why should not I, if it suited my mood, pen this Autobiography in Alexandrines or in hendecasyllables, or in dactylics? I do not write to please the critics, but in the humble hope of interesting the public; and that public I have done my best to interest, to entertain, and, to a certain extent, to instruct for nearly half a century.

At all events, I can say, with Montaigne, that

this is a book written in good faith. I have told no lies, I have extenuated nothing; nor, I hope, have I set down aught in malice. Many of the incidents which I have recorded may appear trivial, but they were incidents in my life; and had I omitted them I should have been false to the principle which in the outset I laid down for myself as to the form this book should take. I have wished to give the general public a definite idea of the character and the career of a working journalist in the second, third, and fourth decades of the Victorian era. What the new journalism may be like, I neither know nor care, but most assuredly it is not the journalism to which I served my apprenticeship, and in which I have been for many years a skilled workman. I have spoken freely and, I hope, appreciatively of the distinguished journalists of whom I have been the contemporary; and I can review the work which I have myself done without regret and without shame. Almighty Providence has denied me genius or even brilliancy of talent; but it endowed me with a stern, strong power of Volition; and to the exercise of that will, disciplined by industry and strengthened by study, I owe all the public acceptance which I have obtained.

In writing the concluding lines of this book, I cannot help feeling considerable regret that limitation of space has not permitted me to descant even briefly on scores of eminent people of both sexes whom I have known, or who have been endeared to me by the sacred ties of friendship. But the reading public would not have endured four volumes of my "Life and Adventures," and they may even find two volumes beyond their patience. If I had had space I should have said something about my brethren of the old Reunion Club, held at the Bedford Head in Maiden Lane; of Henry J. Byron, and Tom Robertson, the dramatists; of Frank Talfourd, James Holland, Stirling

Coyne, Charles Selby, Bayle Bernard, Westland Marston, Leicester Buckingham, George Honey, Morgan John O'Connell, and James Lowe. These are all names that in the bygone you could conjure with—names representative of celebrity in literature and art, but which at present, I fear, have become as dim as the shadow of the shadow of smoke.

The sins of commission in this work are many, but those of omission are far greater. I have not had room to say half my say; but that which I have said I have endeavoured to make lucid and coherent.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Royal Palace Hotel,
Kensington, W.
Christmas, 1894.

P.S.—It may interest a few of my readers if I tell them that although at least fifty works of fiction, essays, criticism, and travels have been produced by my pen, they have all been reprints, either from magazines or from the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, and that this my "Life and Adventures" is literally the first book that I have written "right off." I should be wanting in gratitude were I not to express my thanks to Mr. A. P. Watt, of Hastings House, Norfolk Street, Strand, for the trouble and worry which he has saved me by his intelligence and painstaking negotiations with my esteemed publishers.

G. A. S.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

NONAGE. PAGE

Birth, Parentage, and Descent—Brothers and Sisters—My Mother—Godfather and Godmothers—A Fairy Godmother?—Early Recollections—A Tender Nurse. 1

CHAPTER II.

BLINDNESS AND AFTERWARDS.

Sir Wathen Waller—The Royal Kitchens at the Brighton Pavilion—Suffering Many Things at the Hands of Doctors—Total Blindness—Homœopathic Treatment—Recovery—A "Rummy" Eye—Learning to Read and Write—The Teacher Taught—A Theory of Memory . . 12

CHAPTER III.

BRIGHTON IN THE OLDEN TIME.

Captain Gage—A "Function" without Refreshments—Greediness of the Present Age—My Mother and Eliza Vestris—The Former's Patronesses—A Tribute to Queen Victoria—Harriet Mellon—The Baroness Burdett-Coutts—Notable Confectionery—Viscountess Combermere—"Lent Out" for the Evening—The Master of Ceremonies at Brighton—Malibran and her Fee—Paganini Sketched—His Love of Gold and his Generosity . 22

CHAPTER IV.

IN TOWN, 1836—1839.

Life at Cricklewood—A Reminiscence of Weber—A Tearful but Profane Cook—Strong Language in High Society—A Black Man with a Waterloo Medal and a Wooden Leg—Musical Preferences—Favourite Melodies—Sir Henry Meux and his Brewery—My Mother and the Duke of Wellington 36

CHAPTER V.

SOME OF MY MOTHER'S FRIENDS.

Donizetti and his Pathetic End—His Kinsman and the Sultan—Bellini—Cherubini and the Ugly Tenor—At a Reception of the Countess of Blessington's—Harrison Ainsworth—Louis Napoleon—Theodore Hook and his Talk—Thomas Campbell—Haynes Bayly—Malibran—Balfe—A Second-rate Tragedian—Miss Helen Faucit—The "Masters Farren"—Tyrone Power—Fieschi 47

CHAPTER VI. PAGE

THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Braham—Nerot's Hotel—The Royal St. James's Theatre—First Performance of *Agnes Sorel*—Morris Barnett in *Monsieur Jacques*—London "Not such a very Big Village": Two Anecdotes—Mrs. German Reed—*The Strange Gentleman*—*The Village Coquettes*—*Artaxerxes*—A Child who wanted to be Left Alone—*The Beggars' Opera*—My Mother's Parts—Dancing the Cachucha—Braham's Sons and Daughter—Mrs. Stirling—Dickens and the Dramatisation of "Oliver Twist"—The Importance of Little Things: Turning an Honest Guinea—The Regent's Park Colosseum—Its Variety Entertainments and Drinking Bars . . . 62

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE BEDOUIN ARABS AT THE COLOSSEUM TO THE DAWNING OF PICKWICK.

Taking Tea with Arab Acrobats—The Perversion of Abdallah—End of the Colosseum—John Clayton—A Transformation: Hebe and Mrs. Gamp—Braham's Vicissitudes—Frances Countess Waldegrave—First Sight of Charles Dickens—The "Bozomania"—My Brother Frederick—A Young Gentleman's Dress in the Second Year of the Reign—At School in Paris 81

CHAPTER VIII.

NEWGATE NOVELS AND AN APOLOGY.

"Playing at Dickens"—Crown Court Alley—The Taste of the Age in Fiction—The Greenacre Murder—"Catherine": a Parody that Failed—Ainsworth's "Rookwood" and "Jack Sheppard"—Early Studies in Literature—Advice from Lord Brougham 94

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE GREEN-ROOM.

Sir Michael Costa: Applause behind the Curtain—A Theory of the Origin of "Green Room"—Edmund Yates and his Mother—Gilbert à Beckett—"Stock Authors": Planché, William Brough, Dion Boucicault—Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall—Miss Alison—The *Love Chase* at the Haymarket—Domestic Service Fifty Years Ago—A Generous Physician—My Mother's Illness and Benefit Performance 105

CHAPTER X.

EARLY EDUCATION.

Learning Melodies by Ear—Latin and Greek—Minor Accomplishments—Barbarity of English Schools—The Fear of the Rod—*Maladie de Langueur*—A Family Council. 119

CHAPTER XI.

SCHOOL DAYS IN PARIS.

French Boys and their Games—Black-hole—*Pions*—A Man of the Name of Baquet—At the Théâtre Comte—Alexandre Dumas *fils*—The Salon Frascati—Lady Granville in a Chair of State—Grisi, Tamburini, Lablache, and Pauline Garcia—Lady Harriet d'Orsay and her Ringlet—French Animosity—Back to England. 125

CHAPTER XII. PAGE

PROVINCIAL THEATRICALS.

The Theatre Royal, Dover—Henry Wallack and his Slip of the Tongue—James Wallack and his Sons—An Early Novel—Producing *The Yellow Rose*—W. H. Copeland and his Honest Check-takers—Charles Sala as Hamlet—Shakespeare as the Ghost—A Military Funeral . . . 136

CHAPTER XIII.

BACK IN LONDON.

Herne Bay in 1841—In the Quadrant again—The Dawn of the Envelope—Balfe and his Wife—The Duchess "Vicky"—The Princess's Theatre under John Medex Maddox—Thackeray's "Mr. Polonius"—The Charterhouse and some of its Inmates—Madame Feron—Duke Charles of Brunswick—H. P. Grattan—Weiss's "Shape"—A Cloak with a Scarlet Lining—Family Details—Running Intellectually to Seed. . 144

CHAPTER XIV.

BOLTON HOUSE, TURNHAM GREEN.

At a Pestalozzian School—Athletics a Waste of Time—Where the Battle of Waterloo was not Won—A Fat Dancing Master and his Method—A Visit to Drury Lane—Amateur Theatricals—Dislike of German—Two Linguistic Phenomena 159

CHAPTER XV.

EXPERIMENTS.

In a Studio—Making up Tradesmen's Books—An Unfortunate Publisher—Early Glimpses of Bartle Frere, Alexander Cockburn, and Thackeray—Copying Legal Documents—George Wieland—Scene-Painting—The *Night Dancers*—An Unfinished Opera: A Coincidence—Stories of Macready—A Double Personality—Charles Mathews—A Stock Author—The Origin of *Box and Cox*—Bidding Farewell to Scene-Painting . 170

CHAPTER XVI.

FACING THE WORLD.

Albert Smith—Shirley Brooks—The Misses Walkinshaw—Angus Bethune Reach—Macready the Victim of a Mistake—The Café de l'Europe and its Patrons—Mr. Jabez Hogg—The "Process" Idea—The Broughs—On the Staff of the *Man in the Moon*—Louis Haghe and Birket Foster—George Cruikshank—Watts Phillips—Penny Dreadfuls—Edward Lloyd—Saville Faucit 195

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING ON.

The Poet Bunn's "Word with *Punch*"—My Collecting Crazes: A possible Final Cause—Learning to Etch—First Appearance in Print—Anti-French Feeling in London and the Production of *Monte Cristo* at Drury Lane—Appointed Editor of *Chat*—Sworn a Special Constable—Grisi's Mistake in the National Anthem—Sedition and Loyalty at the Opera . 211

CHAPTER XVIII. PAGE

EARLY DAYS OF QUILL-DRIVING.

The "Australian Nights' Entertainment"—Reading up Convict Literature—The Old Reading-Room of the British Museum—Thomas Miller, the Basket-Weaving Poet—Dramatic Criticism—A Negro Tragedian—Mrs. Warner—Samuel Phelps—The Bettys—The Derivation of "Spencer"—The Elder Farren: "The Cock Salmon of the Stage"—*The Death Warrant* becomes *The Guide to Life*—Ada Isaacs Menken and her Matrimonial Proclivities—Lola Montes—Duke Charles of Brunswick and Louis Napoleon 223

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNALISTS OF THE PAST.

Thomas Littleton Holt and his Ventures—Beards and Moustaches—The Railway Mania—The *Iron Times*—Wallowing in Gold—The Crash—Pierce Egan the Elder and his Recollections 236

CHAPTER XX.

POVERTY.

The School in which Johnson Learned Compassion—A Slave to the Pipe—Vicarious Smoking—Selling a Quack Medicine—A Windfall—In Paris Again—My First Book of Pictures: "Hail, Rain, Steam, and Speed" . 245

CHAPTER XXI.

"NO POPERY" AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

"Red-Hot Works of Art"—Cardinal Wiseman—"The Great Exhibition Wot is To Be"—Another Windfall: Making a Fool of Myself—Simpson's Cigar Divan—Costly Pocket-handkerchiefs 256

CHAPTER XXII.

STARTING A MAGAZINE AND BREAKING THE BANK.

The *Conservative Magazine*—The Death of Sir Robert Peel: Police in Mourning—"Pitching into" the Railway King—Fate of the New Venture—"Mr. Hopeful" and his "System"—My Horror of Mountains—First Visit to Brussels—At Aix-la-Chapelle—Mr. Hopeful Changes his System: The Result—A New Comic Panorama of the Great Exhibition—Falling in Love—Doing Justice to a High Tea—Reminiscences of Brougham 266

CHAPTER XXIII.

BALLOONING.

Taking a Share in a Balloon—Lieutenant Gale and his Plan for Finding Franklin—A Small Audience and a Disappointed Confectioner . . 285

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORLD'S FAIR.

Alexis Soyer—Disraeli—The Opening of the Great Exhibition—The Refreshment Department—In a Balloon Accident—A Letter to the *Times* and its Consequences—Abandoning Art for Journalism—Benjamin Lumley and his Kindness 291

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE STAFF OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS."

PAGE

Articled to an Engraver—*Harlequin Billy Taylor*—To Paris: the *Coup d'État*—A Visit to the Lapin Blanc in Disguise—Dion Boucicault and the *Corsican Brothers*—A Rival Version—Charles Sala's Retirement from the Stage 301

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOTUS-EATING.

Etching a Panoramic View of the Great Duke's Funeral—Dean Milman—Loafing—The Reunion and Savage Clubs—*Punchinello*—A Bed of "Back-stock"—Driving the Quality out of Hyde Park—The "Leave Us Alone Club"—A Digression—A Visit to Petticoat Lane with Keeley Halswelle—His Method of Draughtsmanship—Henry Vizetelly and the *Illustrated Times*—Edmund Yates—Augustus Mayhew and Charles Bennett—James Hannay—A Disunited Staff—My Time not Wholly Wasted—The Gospel of Hard Work—The *Comic Times* and the *Train*—*London*—English Hotels 311

CHAPTER XXVII.

MY FIRST "JOURNEY DUE NORTH."

A Mysterious Travelling Companion—Copenhagen—Fascinating Offers of Alcoholic Refreshment—Borrowing a Device of Mazzini's—Installed at St. Petersburg—Russian Dishes—The Knout—A Censor and his Methods—A Droll *Table d'Hôte*—Recollections of Napoleon the Great—A Female Corporal—Geneviève Ward—A Ball at the American Legation—About Cigars—The Russian Boyard—The *Moujik*—A Lineal Descendant of Ginghis Khan—Back at Brussels—Short Commons . . . 338

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH DICKENS.

Home Again—In Search of a Publisher—A Rupture with Mr. Wills and with Dickens—Consulting Mr. Henry James—Results of the Russian Trip—"The Baddington Peerage": the Worst Novel ever Perpetrated—I am Characterised by Mrs. Carlyle—*The Welcome Guest* 369

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE STAFF OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

My First Visit to the Offices of the *Daily Telegraph* in an Embroidered Camlet Vest—Getting Rigged Out at a "Reach-me-down" Shop—Early Leading Articles—Dickens's Quarrel with Bradbury and Evans—*All the Year Round* and *Once a Week*—A Deputation on the Paper Duty—The Great Lord Derby—The Cheap Press Forty Years Ago—"Flying Stationers"—Reconciliation with Dickens—Another Attempt to Break the Bank—A *Times* Review and its Consequences—"Make Your Game"—"Twice Round the Clock"—Edmund Yates on his Early Indiscretions—A Hard Day's Work—My Radicalism Leavened with Conservatism—The St. Johns—Different Methods of the *D. T.* Staff—Penny Papers Held in Contempt—George Hodder—Smoking at Public Dinners . . 378

CHAPTER XXX. PAGE

MATRIMONIAL.

"Gaslight and Daylight" and "Looking at Life"—Night Houses—Panton Street, Haymarket, and its Patron Saint—Mr. and Mrs. "Jehoshaphat"—A Split Nose: A Coincidence—Bidding Good-bye to Bohemia—Marrying in Haste not to Repent at Leisure—Settling Down in Brompton Square—D. G. Rossetti and His Models—Taking an Interest in Things Feminine—Choice Dinners 402

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE "GREAT EASTERN."

The *Leviathan* Re-christened—Captain Harrison, "the Atlantic Navigator"—An Explosion—A Ghastly Spectacle—Lord Stafford's Resourcefulness—My Narrow Escape—The *Great Eastern's* Ill Luck—A Volunteer Review in Hyde Park—Orsini's Attempt on the Life of Napoleon III.—The Trial of Dr. Claude Bernard—"Mr. Leighton" and "Mr. Millais" in the March Past—"Defence, not Defiance"—A Memorable *Levée*—Edmund Yates and the "Fifty Guinea Hogarth" 413

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE STARTING OF "TEMPLE BAR."

The "Hogarth Papers"—A Drawing of the Boy Hogarth at Work—*Temple Bar* and its Staff—Mr. Robert Buchanan—The Austins—The *Saturday Review* and its Onslaughts—Sir Wm. Harcourt—Abandoning Literature for Journalism—"Echoes of the Week"—Peter Cunningham and Frederick Dickens—"Jack" Reeve—Finding the Hermit of "Tom Tiddler's Ground" 427

THE

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

CHAPTER I.

NONAGE.

Birth, Parentage, and Descent—Brothers and Sisters—My Mother—Godfather and Godmothers—A Fairy Godmother?—Early Recollections—A Tender Nurse.

On the twenty-fourth of November, 1828, I first saw the light in New Street, Manchester Square, London. I was the last of a family of thirteen children, only five of whom survived the tenderest years. My father was mortally sick at the time of my birth; and a very few weeks afterwards he died, at the early age of thirty-eight, either in London or in a house long since pulled down on the Old Steine, Brighton—a corner house hard by Pegge's Royal Hotel. His name was Augustus John James Sala; and he was the son of Claudio Sebastiano Sala, a Roman citizen who came to England about the year 1776 and was concerned with Sir John Gallini in the management of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, afterwards Her Majesty's: burnt down in 1867, and

rebuilt, but of which, at present, not one stone remains upon another.

My grandfather came of an ancient Roman family. There are three clans or families of my name in Italy :— One in Piedmont, one in Lombardy, and one in the Eternal City. Anciently, I apprehend, our people were persons connected with some *Aula* or court; but whether as courtiers, clerks, ushers, or beadles, I do not know. In the Dark Ages *Aula* seems to have got corrupted into *Sala*. I have frequently, in the course of numerous visits during the last twenty-five years to Rome, sought for information touching my grandfather's engendrure ; but I could only ascertain that I had a grand-uncle who was domestic prelate to Pope Pius VI., and was subsequently created a Cardinal. I believe that he is buried at Viterbo, and I have two portly volumes purporting to be by "G. A. Sala," which he published in the last years of the eighteenth century, on the political history of his time. On the other hand, a Spanish gentleman was once so kind as to write to me telling me that a branch of our *gens* settled some time in the Early Renaissance in Spain, and that one of them rose to the rank of Grand Inquisitor. My correspondent courteously forwarded me a tracing of the family arms, which I did not elect to adopt : first, because I was not desirous to increase my contributions to the Inland Revenue ; and next, because in these days every cad can get a crest from a fancy stationer.

Apart from the fact that Monsignore G. A. Sala wrote the book to which I have alluded, I have no very

definite information as to my immediate kindred; beyond a letter which I discovered in a little box covered with calf's skin in which my mother used to keep the most private of her papers. The letter, in very faded ink, was addressed to my father and was dated from Venice, some time in the year 1815. It was signed Nina Bucca; and the writer appeared to be my progenitor's aunt. She had been married, I gathered, to a wealthy merchant at Trieste, but had fallen upon evil days, and she sought assistance from my father. The postscript was a curious one: "Take care," she concluded, "never to say that I danced on the tight-rope at the Carnival of Venice in 1780." Thus families have their ups and downs; and, as worthy John Oxenford once rhymingly put it, "one soars high and one falls flat, and one becomes an acrobat." I never had the slightest ambition or wish to make it believed that I came of an illustrious stock; and it was for that reason that I have been quite candid in regard to the "tight-rope" dancing incident. It is not so with some people. Many a man is never tired of telling you that his uncle was cousin german to a baronet; but he quite forgets to tell you that his grandmother was a cook. Thus, it has been figuratively remarked that the mule is extremely fond of talking about his mamma the mare; but that he is singularly reticent concerning his papa the jackass.

I was the youngest, as I have said, of thirteen children, and of the four who were surviving at the time of my birth, my brother Frederick was eight years my

senior; my brother Charles was six years, my sister Augusta was four years, and my brother Albert was two years older than myself. They were all dark, even to swarthiness, and had coal-black hair. My eldest sister Henrietta had died at Brighton at the age of four, in the year 1814. Her bones moulder in the churchyard of the old parish church of St. Nicholas; and were she alive now, she would be eighty years of age. I have a plan of the churchyard drawn by my father in an old letter-book with the sketch of an arrow pointing to "poor Hetty's grave;" and on fine days I often wander into the ancient graveyard to gaze on the stump of the mediæval cross, and to read the inscription on the tombstones of Captain Nicholas Tattershall, who helped Charles II. to escape to France after Worcester fight, and Phœbe Hessel, the female grenadier; but I have never been able to find poor Hetty's grave.

My mother, Henrietta Catherina Florentina Simon, was a native of Demerara. Her father was a wealthy planter owning some hundreds of slaves. Her mother was a Brazilian lady from Rio de Janeiro; and I think that I have heard my mother say that there was some Red Indian blood in her mother's ancestry. My poor sister Gussy was indeed the image of a pretty little Indian squaw. At the age of four, that is to say, in the year 1793, my mother was sent to England for her education. She came to this country in a merchant vessel called the *Reindeer*, with a whole flotilla of other trading ships, under convoy of a couple of frigates. Her guardian in England was a Mr. McGarell,

who afterwards became an immensely rich merchant; and she was accompanied by two negresses as nurses, who, of course, were slaves. These good women passed most of their time in sitting on the stairs weeping and wailing to be sent back to the West Indies, and to slavery; and looking at that fact, I should say they had not had such a very hard time of it in bondage.

The school to which the youthful Henrietta Catherina Florentina was sent was a huge old brick mansion at Kensington. I remember it well; but in my boyhood it had been converted into a private lunatic asylum, and it was afterwards demolished to make way for the palatial residence built for Baron Albert Grant, but in which he was not destined to take up a permanent residence; and his palace, like its predecessors, was levelled to the ground. My dear mother often used to tell me of her school days. How she used to pay one of the little ones a small weekly stipend for crawling under the table during evening lessons and rubbing her chilblains. How there were stocks and backboards; and how in the court yard at the back there was a ramshackle old yellow chariot, which the more advanced pupils were taught to enter and alight from with all proper grace and dignity; so that, if they were fortunate enough to marry rich husbands, they might thoroughly understand the mysteries of entering and leaving a carriage. There were a hundred girls in the school, some very little ones, and some fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years old; and they were nearly all either East or West Indians. In those days, when the state

of war between England and France had to all appearance become chronic, colonial girls who came to school in their early childhood frequently remained in the same scholastic establishment until they were marriageable. She used to tell me also how the bread-and-butter at breakfast and tea was so abundant that it had to be brought in in piled-up wicker baskets.

For the rest, the education which she received was a splendid one. We talk a great deal in these days about the "higher education" of girls, and the immense progress which has been made in the intellectual training of our daughters at high schools and colleges, and at Girton and Newnham. I freely grant that my mother never had any kind of mathematical training in the sense ordinarily used, although she was a capital accountant—and, unless I am mistaken, arithmetic is a branch of mathematics; but otherwise she was taught, I apprehend, quite as carefully and quite as amply as young ladies at the highest of high schools in this scientific era. French she learned perfectly from an old French *émigré* Marquis, who was only too glad to earn a livelihood by imparting his delightful language to *les demoiselles Anglaises*. She wrote a clear, firm, legible, but delicate and feminine hand. In those days the writing-master was a very important personage in ladies' schools; and the art of constructing "flourishes" was sedulously cultivated. She drew admirably, and she sang beautifully, being gifted with a charming mezzo-soprano voice. She was a perfect pianoforte player; but more than all these, was she

thoroughly well-read in English literature of the highest kind. Hume, Robertson, Pope, Swift, Addison, and Steele were familiar to her; and to her being well-versed in the writings of the great theologians of the seventeenth century, I owe the addictiveness which I have always had for such writers as Baxter, Hooker, Stillingfleet, Jeremy Taylor, South, and Barrow, whose sermons and essays I have been continually copying out and striving to imitate for more than forty years, and who have often helped me over a stile in some of the many thousand leading articles which I have contributed to a single London daily newspaper, and which the envious and the foolish usually agree to say are "knocked off." Knocked off, forsooth! They have been ground out of my brains in the course of a life more than half of which has been devoted to systematic and unwearying study.

I was christened at the Church of St. Mary, Wyndham Place. My godfather was a Captain Fairfield, whose son I have yet sometimes the pleasure to meet in society; and from the Captain, I surmise, I got my third Christian name of Henry. My godmothers were, first, the Hon. Mrs. Georgina Villiers, who had been a Miss Elphinstone and was the daughter of Viscount Keith, the Admiral whose unpleasant duty it was to convey to Napoleon the intelligence that the British Government intended to deport him to St. Helena. Lord Keith died five years before I was born; but I well remember the Viscountess Keith, a little old lady in a black silk calash who lived at 110, Piccadilly. When I was

about ten or eleven my mother used to take me sometimes to see the Viscountess. She always gave me a guinea; while to my parent she would make a highly acceptable present of a bottle of old port wine. I was wont to eye her furrowed but beautiful features very intently; and I am afraid the good old dame must have thought that I was a very rude boy and was trying to stare her out of countenance. But there was a very good reason why I scanned her so attentively. My mother had told me that Lady Keith was one of the daughters of Mrs. Hester Thrale; that she had been Dr. Johnson's "Queenie," and had often sat on the knee of that great and good man. My second godmother was Lady Augusta Fitzclarence, one of the children of William IV. by the delightful Dorothy Jordan. She was afterwards Lady Augusta Gordon, and eventually Lady Augusta Kennedy Erskine, and I remember visiting her when quite a little boy at Kensington Palace, where she filled some kind of office.

I have a little more to say in connection with my baptism. Two or three years ago an unknown female correspondent wrote to me saying that she was the possessor of my christening cap. Whether she wished to present that trifling article of infantile attire to me as a gift, or whether her wish was to part with it for a consideration I am not certain. I am afraid in any case that I never answered her letter. Again, a few days after I landed in Melbourne in 1885, a venerable lady called upon me at Menzies' Hotel and informed

me that she had held me in her arms at the baptismal font. She was very talkative and very nice; and I think she did not go away without some slightly substantial appreciation on my part of the honour which she had done me in the winter of 1828; but oddly enough, it chanced that dining that self-same evening at Government House with the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Loch, I incidentally alluded to the visit paid me by the nice old lady. "Dear me," quoth His Excellency, "a nice old lady such as you describe called on me a short time after my arrival in the colony; and she informed me that she had held me in her arms at the baptismal font ever so many years ago." Well; we are all born to fulfil some function or another. This lady's calling in life was evidently to hold babies when they were christened. Perhaps she was a third godmother whose name had escaped me. A fairy godmother, possibly.

I am now about to mention a circumstance which may provoke a considerable amount of incredulity. That I have generally speaking a fairly retentive memory is simply due to the fact, that early in my teens I began systematically to cultivate and to discipline and exercise that memory day by day and night by night, with a view to the conservation and utilisation of one of the pleasantest and most profitable of human faculties. But there are spontaneous phenomena of memory; and I unhesitatingly assert that I have a perfectly distinct remembrance of the death of George IV., who breathed his last, as everybody knows, in the month of June, 1830,

when I was less than two years old. Who told me the king was dead, and how I heard it I know not; but there is the fact, and to it I will add the circumstance that the announcement of the death of the Fourth George is indissolubly associated in my mind with a yellow postchaise. The only theory that I can possibly form on the subject is that the dying monarch was attended in his last moments by two most eminent medical men, Sir Henry Halford, and Sir Matthew Tierney. The last was my mother's intimate friend, and frequently attended me in my early childhood; and it is just, as I say, within the bounds of possibility that he may have driven up to town from Windsor in a postchaise, and conveyed the mournful intelligence to my mother, in my presence.

I remember nothing else till the year 1832. Of the great cholera epidemic of that year I preserve a photographic recollection. We lived in North Audley Street opposite the town house of the Earl of Clarendon. One of the servants in his lordship's household had died of cholera. The coffin, bound with ropes, was brought out to be placed in the hearse; but an immense mob had collected, as there was a rumour that the body had not been washed; and something very like a riot broke out; so serious was it that a company of the Foot Guards had to be sent for from the adjacent Portman Street Barracks. I can hear the hoarse roar of the populace and see the red coats and white trousers of the soldiers, now.

There is only one more reminiscence of our house

in North Audley Street that lingers in my mind. The room in which I slept was in the top of the house: it was a front room; and I was a sleepless little child. By what by-me-ignored process of sciography the phenomenon came about, or whether that which I saw was merely the offspring of the imagination, I will not undertake to determine; but I have a clear recollection of the shadows of two gigantic figures which seemed to me to be projected, now on the ceiling, and now on my bed, where I was tossing and tumbling a sleepless, invalid little urchin. Then the mental curtain fell again, to rise only with very brief intervals for three years. I was told in after-life that in my infancy I was sent out to nurse at Edgware. Sixty years ago children, taken from the care of the monthly nurse, used to be bundled into the country and kept there for four or five or six years. When I was about six, it appears that my nurse at Edgware was informed that I was about to be removed from her custody. Probably, I was a profitable bantling with whom, for substantial reasons, she was unwilling to part; and she evinced her displeasure at my being taken away in a remarkably decisive manner. I had had an attack of the measles; and while I was recovering, this strong-minded woman—it was in the month of March—opened every door and window in her cottage and left them open for a considerable time. The result was a horrible attack of inflammation. I turned purple, I lost my hearing, and, some time afterwards, I lost my sight.

CHAPTER II.

BLINDNESS AND AFTERWARDS.

Sir Wathen Waller—The Royal Kitchens at the Brighton Pavilion—Suffering Many Things at the Hands of Doctors—Total Blindness—Homœopathic Treatment—Recovery—A "Rummy" Eye—Learning to Read and Write—The Teacher Taught—A Theory of Memory.

THERE were scenes of duskiness and dimness and twilight before the actual Night came. I was taken, I think, to almost every eminent oculist in London, and to many physicians and surgeons besides, who included in their practice the treatment of diseases of the eye. Sir Wathen Waller, who had been physician to George IV., saw me early in the 'thirties. He had apartments in one of the minarets of the Pavilion at Brighton. All I remember of him was that he had a fully powdered head, which, to my nervous thinking, he wagged at me in a far from encouraging manner. Otherwise, I was much more interested with the Royal kitchens at the Pavilion, through which, by special favour, we were conducted. The bright copper stew-pans, the huge roasting ranges, the cooks in their white caps and jackets and aprons, filled my childish mind with rapture; and the scene which I saw at Brighton in the early days of William IV. reverted to me brightly and vividly when, long afterwards, the late Lord Alfred Paget kindly took me through the kitchens of Windsor Castle, where unusual activity was reigning in con-

sequence of the visit of the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia to Her Majesty the Queen, soon after the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Tsarevna.

Then, also in Brighton, Lawrence, of the Grand Parade, had something to do with my unfortunate visual organs; and in London I was taken to the famous Lawrence of Whitehall, against whom there was a tremendous outcry just then in goody-goody circles, in consequence of some rather heterodox opinions of which the great surgeon had delivered himself in the course of some lectures on physiology. The elder Guthrie also was kind enough to give my mother the benefit of his advice. A stern, rugose, seemingly crabbed but really kind-hearted man was Mr. George James Guthrie. He had been an army surgeon of great distinction; and in that capacity he had amputated the leg of the Marquess of Anglesey, which was fractured by the last shot, so they said, fired at the battle of Waterloo. Guthrie's son Charles also became a distinguished surgeon, and was a dashing young man about town in the days when I too was rambling on the outskirts of Bohemia. Of Sir Matthew Tierney I have already made mention; and I should also enumerate Sir James Clark as one of the kind doctors who saw me, heard the catalogue of my symptoms, gave advice, and would take no fee.

I shudder now, sometimes, when I think of the tortures that I underwent through the kind endeavours of those who loved me to make me see. I will not positively say that my eyes were ever taken out and

scraped, and then put back again; but my medical advisers seemed to contemplate such operations, such extreme processes; and it appeared to me that surgical science almost exhausted herself in endeavours to lighten my imminent darkness. How many times have I been cupped; how many dozens of leeches have been applied to my temples! Then the quacks had a turn. My eyes were rubbed with "golden ointment;" and I was made to take some nostrum called, I think, "Grimstone's Eye Snuff." I knew Grimstone in the flesh some fifteen years after I had, all unwittingly, inhaled his herbal snuff. He kept a tobacconist's shop in High Street, St. Giles's. He was a merry man with a great liking for the drama; and I used to do profitable business with him by getting pictorial advertisements of his name into the "comic business" of the pantomimes. Then the strange device was tried of piercing my ears. I perfectly remember the operation, which took place at a jeweller's shop in the Quadrant, Regent Street; and if I feel the lobes of my ears now, although the orifices have long since been closed, the piercing is still palpable. After that they shaved my head. A wig it was not considered expedient that I should wear; but a black silk handkerchief was bound round my head, and the fringe of this kerchief was supposed to do duty as hair. It was under these circumstances, I think, and when the twilight was getting murkier and murkier every week, that I once heard my mother's maid speak of me to my nurse—a very different person from the female who tried to kill me—

as "that miserable little object." I have not the slightest doubt that I was an "object;" and I am sure that what with the doctors and the leeches and the cupping, I was intensely miserable; but the contumelious expression of the lady's maid cut into my heart as though with a sharp knife. It was almost a relief when the twilight deepened into night, and I was totally blind.

Through God's mercy I was not unhappy while I was a blind boy. I had, as I have already stated, a dear sister named Augusta. When I became sightless I could neither read nor write; but I was an observant child, and had often had my ears boxed for asking questions and listening too attentively to the conversation of my elders. How many thousands of clever children have been made wretched through the cruel stupidity of parents in giving effect to the accursed proverb that "little pitchers have long ears!" The faculty of observation, of curiosity, and of retaining in the mind that which is acquired should be assiduously cultivated by every judicious parent. In a vast majority of instances stupid mothers do their very best to prevent their children learning the things which in after-life will be the most useful to them. Out of the depths, then, of my necessity came the sweet, low voice of my sister to cheer, to comfort, and to help me. For hours every day she read to me. First the Bible and stories for children and fairy tales; afterwards books of history, of travels, and biography; lastly, such extracts from the newspapers of the day as she thought I could

understand—and I very soon understood a great deal more than the dear little soul wotted of.

I really do not know how long I was completely deprived of sight; but I do know that there came after long, long waiting a voice in addition to those of my mother, my sister, and my nurse. It was a voice speaking English with a strong French accent: being that indeed of good Dr. Curée, a French homœopathic physician, and a pupil, if I am not mistaken, of the famous Hahnemann. I was subjected to homœopathic treatment, and put on the homœopathic dietary: dry bread and biscuit, macaroni and vermicelli plainly dressed, meat jellies, boiled chicken; no salmon, but plenty of oysters, beef-tea, green vegetables, plain custards, arrowroot, sweet curds, preserved apples, stewed rhubarb, and so forth. No wine nor beer, no vinegar, no pickles, and no salad. Dr. Curée maintained that my blindness was only an acute form of inflammation of the mucous membrane of the eye; and I think that his globules and dilutions comprised arnica, aconite, and pulsatilla, with some mysterious medicament, which I afterwards read in his prescription as "Mercurius Sol:"

He was unfailingly and indefatigably careful in his treatment of me, and repeatedly told my mother that the days were not far off "ven I should vear the vine green shade over mine eyes before seeing like a gentlemans"; and the days of the green shade did come after a long, bitter, and, but for my sister, heart-breaking time, and I Saw. I recovered entirely

the sight of one eye; recovered it so perfectly that I was able, during some years, to follow the craft of an engraver on metal and stone; recovered it so completely that I acquired a minute handwriting, in which I have indited thousands of leaders, and paragraphs, and forty books of fiction and travels and adventures. The other eye—the right one—has never been good for much. Closing the left eye, I can see with the "duffer" a bright light or a face, or the page of a newspaper held close to me, and nothing else. In this, the evening of a long, laborious, and happy life, I am most profoundly grateful to Heaven for the goodness shown to me in allowing me to retain even this spark of vision; and if I go blind again, I shall not repine.

I cannot help laughing in this connection at a remark once made by my good friend Edward Lawson, editor and chief proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, to my wife, who, conversing with him on some business topic, incidentally remarked that "George had only one eye." "Yes," replied the gentleman who is now Sir Edward Lawson, Bart., "but that is a rummy one!" If it had not been a "rummy" one, I should not have done that which I have done, little as the sum of my labours may appear to be.

I have said that when I partially recovered my sight, I was quite ignorant of the simple arts of reading and writing; and so soon as I was pronounced valid by Dr. Curée, and was emancipated from the green shade bondage, I was taught by my sister to read. Of course,

I knew the alphabet: it was only the signification of the different letters that I had to acquire; and I got an immensity of assistance in this direction from a natural graphic gift. At all events, I drew, first on a slate, and afterwards on paper, all the capitals and the minuscules over and over again, backwards and upside down; and thus fortified, I began to stumble, first through the New Testament, and next through the columns of the *Times* newspaper. I was six months at this most fascinating of hard labour; then, without any assistance at all, beyond that of a strong will and determination, and the exercise of the graphic faculty with which I was endowed, I taught myself to write. Mr. Edward Knobel, who had been my father's solicitor, and who continued to act as my mother's legal adviser, gave me a tall folio entitled "The Universal Penman, Engraved by George Bickham, Printed for the Author, and Sent to the Subscribers if Living within the Bills of Mortality, 1733." I have that folio in my library now. An immense variety of specimens of calligraphy, running hands, upright hands, black letter, print, large and small, I greedily considered, and copied from Bickham's copper-plates, every one of which was headed with emblematic sculptures, representing respectively Knowledge, Commerce, Education, Minerva, Pegasus, Mercury, Britannia, Telemachus, and His Majesty King George II., in a full flowing periwig. I used to sit on a little low stool with "The Universal Penman" propped up easelwise against some other book on the carpet; and on my

drawing-board, which I held on my knee, I imitated not only the different styles of handwriting, but also, as well as I could, the emblematic sculptures at the top of the pages, and especially the flourishes between the different paragraphs—flourishes like swans, like eagles with outspread wings, like cornucopias, like the waves of the sea, like ships in full sail, and like festoons of flowers.

Manifestly, this was not the proper way of learning to write. I ought to have sat at a table with my elbows properly squared, holding a quill pen between the thumb, the forefinger, and the third finger, with the fourth finger and the little finger a little bent. As a matter of fact, I held my pen as I hold it now, between the thumb and the fore-finger, in an almost perpendicular position, and "pegged" as I still "peg" away. My mother would occasionally take me in hand and give me a lesson in the orthodox fashion, which she had learned from her writing-master at the great boarding-school at Kensington; but no great success attended her efforts, and the lesson usually ended, either by her boxing my ears if she was in an evil temper, or, if she was in a good one, by her laughingly telling me to follow my own devices.

And now occurred a strange thing. I must have been, I should say, either eight or nine years old by this time. My sister unconsciously had taught me a large number of things. From the books which she had read to me, I had gathered a fair knowledge of English and French history; I was familiar with at least a

dozen of the Waverley Novels; I had the popular version of the Arabian Nights at my tongue's end; and I had begun to be minutely conversant with and intensely interested in the career of Napoleon Bonaparte. One of the first books that I read after I recovered my sight was Barry O'Meara's "Voice from St. Helena." Thus it came about that as soon as I had the full power of my one eye, and could read distinctly and write legibly, I began to teach my sister. Out of the pigeon-holes of my mind which she (Lord love her!) had filled to repletion with facts, I was able to impart to her things which had only made a transient trace on her own dear intellect. It was settled that her vocation in life was to be that of a governess: and she and I read systematically and industriously,—I being the preceptor,—till she was sent to a ladies' school in the Grand Parade, Brighton, preparatory to being "finished" in Paris.

It is my firm and unalterable belief, often repeated, that, so long as our mental faculties have not fallen into decay, we do not and we cannot forget anything. Carlyle was of the contrary opinion. He held that the human mind would only hold a given quantity of things; that quantity to be determined by the mental capacity of the recipient; and that even in the case of the aptest intellectual organisation, when the cask of memory was, so to speak, full to the bung, it would be necessary to expel some item of knowledge to make room for the new-comer, just as it has been humorously

said, that if the Government placed an additional British soldier on the Island of Malta, another soldier, already in garrison there, would fall off. I should be wretched if I believed that such was indeed the truth. I hold that we can always be learning fresh things; and by the exercise of the will so discipline and subordinate our memory as to retain both the old and the new knowledge which we have gathered. I love to think of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, at eighty years of age, making a drawing of himself as a little child in a go-cart, with the inscription beneath, "Ancora impara"—still he learns;—and I am fortified in this creed by the conviction that if a man had all the learning of a Renan, a Huxley, a Jowett, or a Grimm, the erudition which he had heaped up would still be only of the nature of a grain of sand in the immense plain of the things which he had yet to learn. That there are good memories and bad memories I suppose I must concede; but the worst of memories should be improved and developed by discipline, training, and the exercise of stern volition; whereas the best memories will go to seed and become useless if the rein of discipline be relaxed.

CHAPTER III.

BRIGHTON IN THE OLDEN TIME.

Captain Gage—A "Function" without Refreshments—Greediness of the Present Age—My Mother and Eliza Vestris—The Former's Patronesses—A Tribute to Queen Victoria—Harriet Mellon—The Baroness Burdett-Coutts—Notable Confectionery—Viscountess Combermere—"Lent Out" for the Evening—The Master of Ceremonies at Brighton—Malibran and her Fee—Paganini Sketched—His Love of Gold and his Generosity.

It must have been in the year 1835 that I began to be consecutively cognisant of the world and its ways. I have fixed on this particular year for a good many reasons. My mother lived for a third of the year in London; six months at Brighton; and the remaining three months she usually passed in great country houses, both as a guest and in pursuit of her profession as a teacher of singing in the Italian manner. In 1835 we were living in Cannon Place, off the King's Road. A regiment of Guards—the Scots Fusiliers—were in garrison at the time; and I recall to mind the trim figure of Captain Gage of that distinguished corps, in full uniform, swinging his bearskin to and fro in my mother's little drawing-room, and telling her, in tearful accents, that Charles Fitzherbert was dead. The friend whom he was lamenting was the only son of Mr. Thomas Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic gentleman of ancient lineage, and a near connection, I believe, of George the Fourth's Mrs. Fitzherbert. Thomas

Fitzherbert was taller, and gaunter, and more grizzled than Abraham Lincoln, and he was a perfect type of the courteous, dignified gentleman of the old school. He was a firm friend of my mother; and when we were in town, and I was ten and my sister fourteen, we used to make frequent pilgrimages to his chambers in a house, relatively speaking, as tall as himself at the south-east corner of Hanover Square, the façade of which mansion exhibited, and may still exhibit, a wondrously beautiful specimen of the bricklaying of the early Georgian era. The house had been at one time in the occupation of that Viscount Palmerston who wrote the well-known and exquisitely-touching lines on the death of his wife from consumption.

Captain Gage, who so deplored the death of Charles Fitzherbert, I knew afterwards in my adolescence as Major and as Lieutenant-Colonel Gage. He lived to a great age, but was kindly, cheery, and merry to the last; and so late as 1864, my deceased friend Lieutenant-Colonel Ford of the Scots Guards—whose acquaintance, which I made at Montreal, in Canada, in 1863, ripened into an affectionate friendship, terminating only with his life—told me that Colonel or General Gage was at that period still a constant frequenter of the stalls at the theatres, and was known as "Green" Gage.

He was not the only officer of the Household Brigade who was a constant guest at my mother's house in Cannon Place. She had earned, indeed, the pleasant sobriquet of the "Mother of the Guards;" and

her Wednesday afternoons were assiduously frequented by the dashing young subalterns of the Scots Fusiliers whom she diligently schooled in that *grande manière* of which she was the undoubted possessor. The greatest ladies in the land used to come to those receptions, where not so much as a cup of tea was habitually offered. People came only to talk and to listen to good music; and the music, I can assure you, was worth listening to. The present age I cannot help thinking to be an extremely greedy one. However trifling may be the function, Society will not willingly patronise it unless the proceedings include something to eat and drink. The fine ladies who attend sensational trials take cases of sandwiches and flasks of sherry with them; and when they lunch at home they have scarcely finished a plenteous meal when they begin to drive from house to house stuffing themselves with tea, bread-and-butter, plum-cake, and chocolate-creams. Nor does the (too) late dinner of which they subsequently partake prevent them from storming the refreshment-buffets at fashionable "At Homes" and fiercely struggling for *pâté de foie gras*, sandwiches, ices, and champagne-cup. They conclude a day's gormandising by supping after the opera or the play at the Savoy or the Bristol.

You may tell me that it was always thus in patrician society. I deny it. Look at the toilet scene in Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode." To be sure, the black servant is handing a cup of chocolate to Lady Betty Modish or Lady Kitty Frisk, or her

analogue; but at least the gay company are not eating. They are laughing, chatting, singing, tootling on the flute, and perhaps flirting a little. That is what they used to do in Cannon Place, Brighton, A.D. 1835.

My mother had been left, in 1828, a widow, with no money to speak of, and with five children to support. She was a handsome matron, just past her fortieth year. Her picture in crayons, drawn by a Miss Drummond, which is engraved in an article that appeared on her in the *Lady's Museum* in 1827, was partially destroyed by an unfortunate accident; but I had it restored, and it hangs now in my own house in Eastern Terrace, Brighton. In the days of her early matronhood, I can only, of course, remember her as something majestic, and to me at times positively awful. In the portrait of which I speak she is a beautiful woman of thirty-three; her hair dressed in ringlets very high, and with a tiara and a "stomacher," as it was then called, of jewels, the latter over a bodice of satin. This was the dress which she had worn on her first public appearance, in 1827, at Covent Garden Theatre, then under the management of Charles Kemble, in the character of the Countess Almaviva, in a fearfully-mutilated, patched, and cobbled version of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. I am sorry to say that the mutilator, patcher, and cobbler was that superb English musician, Sir Henry R. Bishop. The Susanna of the evening was the enchanting Eliza Vestris, then—she was just thirty—in the golden noontide of her beauty. I am afraid

that my mother and Madame did not get on very well that evening. They were good friends in after-life; but I have heard that on the night of my mother's *début* there was a "tiff" between them behind the scenes, and even on the stage itself, which, in the middle of one scene, the wilful Vestris abruptly left. She was recalled, however, by the uproar of the audience; and, as a peace-offering, sang—shade of Mozart!—the ballad of "I've Been Roaming." Perhaps Vestris was jealous of the sumptuous jewels worn by my mother. Poor soul! The gems were not her own. They had been lent to her for the occasion by Lady Pole, the wife of the gallant Admiral Sir Charles Morice Pole, whose daughter, Miss Anna Pole, had been a pupil of my parent, who taught the young lady not, indeed, to sing, but to speak; since she had been born almost wholly dumb; and my mother had, with infinite pains, and by means of some ingenious process connected with an ivory ball to be rolled between the tongue and the teeth, succeeded in imparting to her the power of articulate speech.

My father's fortunes had been waning for some months before his death. I have sorrowfully verified that fact by finding in his account-books frequent references to "South Seas sold out," "Consols sold out," and so forth; while in a scrap-book full of old-time caricatures and newspaper cuttings appears the alarming entry:—"Mr. Luscombe, money-lender, Bennett Street, St. James's. Call at eleven." Happily for herself,

throughout her brilliant and prosperous married life—1814–1828—my mother had been perfecting herself in the vocal art; and, as I have said in a previous chapter, she was not only a very sweet singer, but an accomplished pianist. She was a pupil of the famous Velluti, one of the last of the male *soprani;* and she presided at the pianoforte at his academy of vocal music. At the death of my father she took with indomitable courage to the profession of a teacher of singing. Terms for such tuition were then very high; and she easily obtained a guinea or a guinea and a half for a single lesson.

She had the countenance of the good Queen Adelaide, of two of the Royal princesses, daughters of George III., and of the Duchess of Gloucester. Even after the accession of our present beloved Sovereign, my parent still enjoyed some marks of Royal patronage. Every year, until her final retirement into private life, she gave concerts in London; and, prior to these performances, a programme, printed on white satin and edged with Brussels lace, used to be sent to the Queen, at Buckingham Palace. The offering was invariably acknowledged by a cheque for ten guineas. I mention this trifling circumstance because the sentiment of gratitude to the Royal Family, for the kindness shown to my beloved mother, has never been, and never will be, I hope, eradicated from my breast. When I had any politics at all—I left them in Australia in 1885—I was one of the people called Radicals, and a very bitter and perhaps blatant

Radical, to boot; but I have never swerved in my loyal love and reverence for the Gracious Lady who rules this vast empire so mildly and so wisely.

Among the ladies who were especially kind in patronising and befriending my mother, I remember first, the Duchess of St. Albans, the once fascinating actress, Harriet Mellon, who after the death of her first husband, the immensely wealthy Mr. Thomas Coutts, espoused *en secondes noces* the Duke of St. Albans. To me, the Duchess comes back stately, benignant, in black velvet and diamonds; just as, *longo intervallo*, the image of Queen Anne, in similar array, came back to Dr. Johnson; but more distinctly do I remember a young lady who always accompanied her, and who, in 1837, was to inherit her vast wealth. This was Miss Angela Georgiana Burdett, now revered and beloved the whole world over as the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

It must have been in 1835, too, that as a little urchin I went with my mother to a grand Twelfth Night entertainment given at the Duchess's house at Brighton. Where it was situated I fail to remember; but I can recall clearly that when the Twelfth Cake was cut, the slice which fell to Miss Angela Burdett contained a magnificent diamond ring. Most children are greedy enough; so I have no hesitation in admitting that the distinctest impressions in connection with this grand Twelfth Night are connected with the cake and the supper. The cake itself—very possibly made at the historic Mutton's, on the King's

Road—was ornamented with a vast number of musical instruments in miniature; and I brought away the models of an ophicleide and a kettledrum, the principal parts of which I am afraid that I devoured before I went to bed. To the supper table there was a very beautiful and I should say unique annexe, in the shape of a confectionery table, the decoration of which was designed as a compliment to Sir John Ross, the Arctic explorer, who had not long before returned from a fresh expedition to the North Pole, equipped at the expense of the great distiller Sir Felix Booth. The field of artistic confectionery represented the Arctic regions; and everything, including the frozen-up ships—I can see the tall masts and the black rigging, snow-flecked, now—the icebergs, the polar bears, the Esquimaux guides with their sledges and dogs, and Captain Ross's brave sailors, was good to eat. None of your coloured chalk, your cardboard, there! It is pleasant to me now, in my sixty-sixth year, to know that I have yet a kind friend in the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

Another visitor to Cannon Place was a handsome lady with flashing eyes and very glossy black hair—a Miss Gubbins, an Irish lady, very rich, very clever, and very witty; a brilliant musician, and a delightfully humorous artist. Long years afterwards I knew her as the third wife of the gallant Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere; and I was constantly a guest at her house in Belgrave Square till she died, verging on ninety years. Of the three gifted and beautiful daughters of Mrs. Thomas Sheridan, I can remember two:—Lady Dufferin,

who died Countess of Gifford, and the Hon. Caroline Norton. Of Lady Seymour, the "Queen of Beauty" of the Eglinton Tournament, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, I have no remembrance.

The name of another leader of society at Brighton occurs to me through a somewhat curious circumstance. This *grande dame* was a Duchess of Canizzaro, who used to give the most splendid entertainments, and was, besides, an assiduous patroness of the public balls and assemblies. Now, opposite to our residence in Cannon Place was the house of the renowned dancing mistress, Madame Michau. Her first husband had been a M. Bizet, originally one of the private secretaries of Napoleon the Great; and at his death she married a French gentleman named Michau, who was especially distinguished for his highly cultivated gastronomic taste and his skilled culinary capacity. Indeed, in addition to his connection with the Terpsichorean art, he was a cook of the first water. The Michau family and my own were on terms of the closest intimacy. Unfortunately their nocturnal gatherings—which by the way were crowned with most *recherché* suppers—did not end until very late in the night, and their late hours were, to me, often a source of much anguish; since, as I was a precocious boy, dear old Madame Michau was always pressing my mother to lend me to her to pass the evening with her guests.

"Lending me out," when it was conceded, was to me a matter of unmitigated delight; but it involved

my being brought home by my nurse at midnight—the poor woman could only plead that she had been kept waiting ever since eleven—and my tardy return to the parental circle was productive of dire woes, both mental and physical. Whenever, however, I was privileged to pass the evening with the Michaus, I was in a kind of terrestrial paradise. Madame, albeit short in stature and somewhat pursy, was a model of grace and refinement in manner, and had been over and over again complimented on her gracefulness by George IV. Her eldest daughter, Sophie Bizet, married a son of the celebrated historical painter, Baron Le Thière, who, under the First Empire, was Director of the French Academy at Rome; and she had a daughter, who still lives to be admired and respected by the members of that dramatic profession which she has for some years past adorned: I mean, Miss Roma Guillon Le Thière, who, although she is much my junior, was my playmate in childhood, and who was one of the loveliest young girls I ever saw.

Madame Michau had another daughter named Louise; and this young lady married a Mr. Davis, against whom nothing more could be said than that at one time he had been an auctioneer in London, and that he was the son of one of the officers of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex. To Mr. and Mrs. Davis the Duchess of Canizzaro presented tickets for the Master of the Ceremonies' annual ball—a festival which, I think, was held at the Old Ship Assembly Rooms. In any case, when they presented themselves

at the portal of the halls of dazzling light, they were refused admission by the Master of the Ceremonies himself, Lieutenant-Colonel Eld. A day or two afterwards Mr. Davis met Colonel Eld in North Street, and, as Artemus Ward would have put it, there was "a fite." The end of the affair was, I believe, that the parties were bound over at the Town Hall to keep the peace. I only mention the *fracas* as a commentary on what, for many of my readers, would appear so much ancient history, and that of the most moss-covered kind. We have no Master of Ceremonies at our watering-places now; but such functionaries, when I was a boy, flourished not only at Brighton and Hastings, but at Bath, at Cheltenham, and at other places of fashionable resort. There may be some slight amplification in the character of Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esq., M.C., who figures in the Bath episode in the "Pickwick Papers;" but on the whole the main lines of the character are true to life. Lieutenant-Colonel Eld was no fop, but a gentleman of rather dignified manners; and I should say that no man ever possessed with greater finish and refinement of manner the art of pocketing the guineas which were handed to him by visitors who wished to enter society when they came to Brighton for the winter season.

In addition to her annual concert in London, my mother used to have a yearly musical recital at Brighton, either just before Christmas or just before Easter. She always took care to engage the brightest

musical talent, both vocal and instrumental, that she could possibly secure. Sometimes she had to pay the great artists whom she engaged; but in a great many more instances they generally gave their services quite gratuitously to the poor widowed gentlewoman with the five children, "clamouring," as Lady Combermere used to tell me in after years, "for large slices of roast mutton." For one of her concerts my mother had had the hardihood to engage the greatest *cantatrice* of the day, and perhaps of this century—Marie Félicie Malibran, the daughter of the famous Spanish tenor, Manuel Garcia. To show the difference that existed between artistic remuneration in 1835 and that which now prevails, it will be sufficient to say that Malibran's fee was only thirty guineas. Paganini, the mere announcement of whose name was sufficient to sell half the tickets for the concert, consented to play a solo for fifty guineas; but my parent nourished the fond hope that one or perhaps both artists would waive their rights and decline to take the money which she offered. All kinds of extraordinary stories were at that time related about Paganini, who, as you know, used to electrify his audiences by executing a concerto on one string of his violin; and the legend in connection with this single-string *tour de force* was that in bygone years he had assassinated one of his mistresses and had been condemned to five years' imprisonment. A compassionate gaoler had allowed him the use of his fiddle in order to solace the dreariness of his captivity; but for fear lest the prisoner should knot the catguts

together and hang himself, he only allowed him the fourth string of the violin, on which he succeeded at last in phenomenally scraping.

The concert duly took place and was a brilliant success, from both a fashionable and a pecuniary point of view; but then came the ordeal of settling with the artists. Many of them, as was their wont, laughingly refused to take a shilling. That was, I remember, in particular the case with a charming vocalist, Mrs. Bishop, the wife of the tuneful composer of whom I spoke just now, Sir Henry R. Bishop. Then came the more formidable question of the claims of Malibran and Paganini. My mother, a lady of great sagacity and fertility of resource, thought that something might be done in the way of exciting a lenitive influence in the minds of the two great musicians if she took me with her when she called to pay her dues. So I was duly washed, and waxed, and polished up—I believe, even, that my hair was curled—and in a new "skeleton" suit and a very large white cambric collar and a frill round it, I was taken, first to the hotel —I forget its name—where Malibran was staying. The renowned singer smiled, patted me on the head, chucked me under the chin, told me to be a good boy, and very calmly took the thirty-one pounds ten shillings which with trembling hands my mother placed on the table.

She had a good cry, poor woman, in the fly which conveyed us to the Old Ship, where Paganini was stopping. I can see him now—a lean, wan, gaunt

man in black, with bushy hair—something like Henri Rochefort, and a great deal more like Henry Irving. He looked at me long and earnestly; and somehow, although he was about as weird a looking creature as could well be imagined, I did not feel afraid of him. In a few broken words my mother explained her mission, and put down the fifty guineas on the table. When I say that he washed his hands in the gold—that he scrabbled at it, as David of old did at the gate—and grasped it and built it up into little heaps, panting the while, I am not in any way exaggerating. He bundled it up at last in a blue cotton pocket-handkerchief with white spots, and darted from the room. And we—my poor mother convulsively clasping my hand—went out on the landing and were about descending the stairs when the mighty violinist bolted again from his bedroom-door. "Take that, little boy," he said; "take that," and he thrust a piece of paper, rolled up almost into a ball, into my hand. It was a bank-note for fifty pounds!

CHAPTER IV.

IN TOWN, 1836–1839.

Life at Cricklewood—A Reminiscence of Weber—A Tearful but Profane Cook—Strong Language in High Society—A Black Man with a Waterloo Medal and a Wooden Leg—Musical Preferences—Favourite Melodies—Sir Henry Meux and his Brewery—My Mother and the Duke of Wellington.

NEEDLESS to say that I did not keep a diary in the thirties, although it was at a sufficiently early age that I began a practice, in favour of which and against which there is a great deal to be said. I have called this chapter "In Town," to distinguish it from those in which I have recorded my youthful experiences at Brighton; but in strict accuracy I should say that the portions of the years which we spent away from the queen of watering-places were passed either in and about Regent Street, London, or else at temporary summer *villeggiature* at Clapham, at Richmond, and at Kilburn. Prior to the dark age in my childhood, my mother had a large house in North Audley Street; and at a very remote period of my nonage, to which I am wholly unable to affix a date, we had a delightful country cottage at Cricklewood, then a sequestered village, but which, I suppose, by this time has altogether passed into the semi-detached villa stage of existence. Our house, I think, was called "The Elms."

I preserve only two mind-pictures of our life at

Cricklewood: first, there were frequent performances of private theatricals: the stage being in the back drawing-room and the auditorium in the front; and between the acts of one of the dramas presented, a Mr. Rippamonti—from his name, I should say, an Italian, but who swore with wonderful fluency in English—played the overture to *Der Freischütz* on his chin.

By-the-bye, my mother, prior to her widowhood, had known Karl Maria Friedrich August von Weber during his visit to England in 1826. He was a frequent visitor at our house in New Street, Manchester Square; and in that scrap-book of which I spoke in a preceding chapter, I have a water-colour drawing of the illustrious German composer in a grey dressing-gown, sitting in a large pink and white-striped covered fauteuil, his head sunk on his breast, and looking desperately ill. Beneath is the inscription, "Alas, poor Karl Maria!" The great musician died, indeed, in London of consumption, on the 5th of June, in the year just named. I have no positive knowledge as to who was the artist of this touching little sketch; but I have an idea that it came from the pencil of young Charles James Mathews, the son of the famous comedian and mimic, Charles Mathews, and himself destined to become an actor of the highest repute. I am strengthened in this belief every time I pass through the corridor leading from the hall to the strangers' coffee-room on the ground-floor of the Garrick Club. One side of that corridor is occupied by a series of water-colour portraits, executed by Charles James

Mathews, of himself in the multitudinous stage-characters which he had impersonated during his long and brilliant dramatic career; and in many of these *aquarelles* I seem to recognise the light touch and the bright colour of the anonymous artist who drew that mournful sketch of the composer of *Der Freischütz*, *Euryanthe*, and *Oberon*.

But there is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. Over and against the sorrowful presentment of the dying musician, I find a drawing by the same hand of a corpulent female cook, holding in one hand an open volume, and with the other staunching with her apron the tears which are abundantly flowing down her rubicund cheeks. The title of this drawing is, "A Student of Goethe," and, beneath, Mrs. Cook is made to say, "Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte! Oh, Werther, Werther!—I must go and skin those D——d eels." Pardon the introduction of the big D. The initial has not, I believe, been very indignantly resented by the patrons and patronesses of the Savoy Theatre; but, passing from the artistic and literary fiction to fact, it may not be inexpedient to hint that prior to the accession of Her Most Gracious Majesty, and even for a few years after that happy event, the use of strong language was pretty common even in the most exalted circles of society: in fact, large numbers of English noblemen were in the habit of swearing as liberally as, according to Corporal Trim, the Duke of Marlborough's army swore in Flanders.

You may say that I have wandered a very long way from Cricklewood. To be sure, it has been my business to wander during ever so many years of my journalistic career; still I have always striven to be a conscientious tramp, and to fulfil all the engagements which I have entered into; and consequently I am bound to place on record the fact that my second and last memory of Cricklewood is associated with the village inn, which bore the sign of "The Crown"—a most palatial establishment at this time of writing, I have no doubt—and its potman, a middle-aged black man with a wooden leg. He had been at the battle of Waterloo—that was quite enough to make him a hero and almost a demi-god in my eyes—although at that combat of giants he had only acted in the non-combatant capacity of cymbal-player in one of the regiments of Foot Guards. Perhaps he had lost his leg from a stray shot while carrying wounded to the rear. In any case he had got his Waterloo medal, which, having a partiality for rum, he was continually pawning; and my mother was periodically solicited to take the silver emblem of glory out of tribulation.

Honest black man! I can see him now stumping along on his timber limb, and over his shoulder, held by a stout leathern strap, his sheaf of pewter pots, glancing brilliantly in the sunshine—as brilliantly as the Waterloo medal on his breast, at such times as that decoration did not happen to be in the keeping of Mine Uncle. When did the black

cymbal-player fade out of the Household Brigade? I mind him well over and over again when I was a boy, very fond of attending the ceremonial of mounting guard in the court-yard of St. James's Palace; and there was a peculiarity in the uniform of the clasher of the silver discs which always enchained my juvenile attention. It was a complicated scroll pattern in golden embroidery on the back part of his pantaloons; a similar ornamentation I noticed long years afterwards in connection with the nether garments of a regiment of Magyar Hussars; but the old scroll pattern in gold had a distinctive name in British military technology. It was known—so an officer in the Scots Fusilier Guards told me in Canada in 1864—as "the dicky-strap," a term which had some reference, I conjecture, to the straps by which the powdered footmen of the nobility and gentry used to hold on to the hinder parts of their employers' equipages.

In the four years between 1835 and 1839 we led a continuously busy life during the London season. I say "we" because I was not sent to school; although I was kept with rigorous severity to home-lessons, because I had no boys of my own age with whom I could play, and because, when I was not learning my book, I was almost constantly in the society of my elders, to whom I was allowed to listen as attentively as I pleased. My mother was generally engaged in teaching singing from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon, and it very often happened that the parents of her pupils did not object to her taking me with her. A

comical sight I must have presented; a little round-headed urchin with a wall eye, clad in that "skeleton" suit with an immense frill, sitting bolt upright in a big easy chair and listening with all my might to the vocal music of which I have always been so passionately fond. The pianoforte I have always steadily hated, although I have heard such wondrous performers on it as Thalberg, Liszt, and Madame Pleyel. I regard the piano as a heartless, soulless instrument; I care little more for the flute; while for the cornet à piston or the oboe I care no more than I do for an Oriental tam-tam; but the violin, when played by a consummate artist, has never failed to ravish my senses with delight.

Unbidden, but never unwelcome, return the melodies which I learnt with the ears of my heart in childhood; often, I suspect, when I was present at the singing lessons given by my mother. "Ruth," "The Pilgrim Fathers," "The Burial in the Desert," every air in *Don Giovanni*, from Leporello's opening "*Notte giorno faticar*" down to the last awful intimation of the "Commendatore" that he has come to sup with the libertine; nearly all the songs in *Robert le Diable*, that sparkling French ditty "*Les Compliments de Normandie*," the brightest lyrical gems from the *Puritani*, *Fidelio*, *Anna Bolena*, and the *Elisire d'Amore*; Haydn's "My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair," and such sweet homely English ballads as "Farewell to the Mountain," "Through the Wood," and "She Wore a Wreath of Roses"—each recurs to

me; although, of course, I cannot precisely remember when or where I first heard these enchanting lyrics.

One house I remember particularly to which I was often taken when my mother gave her lessons. It was a handsome mansion, splendidly furnished, in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, close, if indeed not immediately contiguous, to Meux's brewery at the south-eastern corner of Tottenham Court Road; and, indeed, it was to the female members of the family of Sir Henry Meux that my mother gave vocal instruction. Imagine a wealthy London brewer of the present day living next door to his brewery! He would, in all probability, be the occupant of some towering mansion in Belgravia or Tyburnia, besides being the proprietor of a lordly estate in the Shires and the renter of grouse-moors in Yorkshire and deer-forests in the Highlands. But times have changed with a vengeance. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale resided in a house in Deadman's Place, Southwark, adjoining their brewery, until they removed to the more fashionable locality of Grosvenor Square.

I was not so lucky in childhood as to go to Grosvenor House when my mother gave lessons in the family of the then Marquess of Westminster; but there is a little story of an adventure which once happened to her in connection with the mansion in question—a story which has more than once got into print, but which I wish accurately to repeat; because I desire this, the earliest portion of my autobiography, to be considered as a kind of tribute to the memory of

one whom I loved and reverenced so deeply. She had given a lesson at Grosvenor House one broiling forenoon in July. It was one of those London summer days when the very pavement seems to shimmer and radiate with caloric, and when you cannot resist the impression that the bricks in the house-fronts are panting and expanding with the heat, and will speedily crack and burst out of their bonds of mortar. There was my mother in the open street, and she really panting and palpitating with the heat. She was, moreover, intolerably, agonisingly thirsty. There were no drinking-fountains in London in those days. There were no tastily decorated dairies where glasses of iced milk could be procured. It did not occur to her that if she only crossed Park Lane she could get some curds-and-whey. Her destination lay in the east, and it was even a very long way to Verrey's, in Regent Street, where she could have quenched her thirst with an ice or a *sorbet*. She did not even light upon a chemist's where she could have procured soda- or seltzer-water; so on the poor dear gentlewoman went sadly on, her throat and tongue desiccated and parched with drought.

And at a certain street corner she caught sight of a publichouse—not an hotel nor a *café*, if you please, but a downright, unmistakable "pub.," with a row of gleaming pewter pots on the railings outside, and the doors, giving on both thoroughfares, standing invitingly open and revealing the sanded floor within, and in the umbrageous background a pewter-covered counter, with a trim barmaid presiding at a beer-engine, with rows of

casks and kegs behind her. My mother was the most temperate of mortals; but she was human, and she was so unutterably thirsty! She looked furtively to the right and to the left; and the coast seeming clear she darted into the "Half Moon and Seven Stars," or the "Coach and Horses," or whatever may have been the sign of the tavern, and addressed the trim barmaid, thus: "Half a pint of porter, Miss, if you please." The attendant Hebe handed her the beer in a pewter measure; and over and over again has my dear mother described to me the delicious sensation of the nut-brown foam first coming in contact with her lips, and of the greater joys she experienced as she drained the fermented decoction of malt and hops—not to the dregs, for pure beer has no dregs, but to the very last drop, when she could read what was popularly known at the time as "Grimes's card," Grimes being a highly respectable manufacturer of pewter vessels who had his name stamped inside the bottoms of his measures. A good old Saxon name Grimes; although to stuck-up end-of-the-century people it may seem a plebeian designation. In New England it is a patrician name. I remember once hearing of a great American beauty and heiress whose name was Zenobia Grimes; and I am glad to see in the Post Office London Directory for 1894, that the historic house of Grimes is extant as pewterers at Islington.

My mother had imbibed her half-pint of porter in one sustained and solemn draught, and she was happy. With feminine astuteness she thought that

it might be politic to leave the "pub." by a different door from that by which she had entered. She emerged into the side street; and there to her shame, her horror, and her unutterable confusion she nearly ran up against Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, Prince of Waterloo, Marquis of Douro, K.G., Chancellor of the University of Oxford—but how can I enumerate all the rungs in the ladder of glory which Arthur Wellesley made for himself, with his sword for a saw? The Hero of Waterloo was in his every-day attire—well-polished, well-blocked hat with a narrow brim; single-breasted blue surtout; white cravat without a bow, and fastened behind by a silver buckle; white waistcoat and white trousers—which he wore winter and summer: the trousers strapped tightly over varnished boots. How often have I seen the Great Captain of the Age in his old, old age riding in the forenoon from Apsley House along Constitution Hill to fulfil his official duties at the Horse Guards, and closely followed by a thoughtful, middle-aged groom, who watched his master as a cat watches a mouse; for the Duke, when he had passed fourscore years, used to sway and swerve in his saddle to such an extent that you dreaded lest at the next moment he should fall off. Fortunately it was with him as it is with the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the line of direction from the centre of gravity fell within the base, and the Duke kept his saddle.

Not so fortunate for my mother was it that the Victor of Napoleon was on that particular sultry July day on foot and not on horseback. He knew my

mother very well; and saying curtly, "How do, Madame Sala—that's the way you do it;—public-house, hey?" nodded her a salute and passed on. The next evening my mother was at a rout at Devonshire House, and in a great crush of guests on the grand staircase she met the Duke in his full field-marshal's uniform, wearing his riband of the Garter and his breast ablaze with stars and crosses. He laughingly accosted her; and when in a few pathetic sentences she told him the story of the half-pint of porter he laughed again and said, "Very good—very hot day—just the thing—half a pint of porter—should have had one myself if I hadn't been so close to Apsley House."

Five or six years after this incident my mother and I were walking down Snargate Street, Dover, when we met the Duke, who was then in residence at Walmer Castle as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, leaning on the arm of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, afterwards Lord Raglan. I do not think that his Grace said anything about that pewter measure full of Somebody and Co.'s Entire; but I know that he patted me on the head and hoped that I was good to my mother. I have said over and over again, and I here repeat it, that I firmly believe in Fate, in Necessity, in the Imperatively Indispensable, in that 'ΑΝΑΓΚΗ which, so Victor Hugo tells us, was the text on which he wrote his romance of "Notre Dame de Paris." Fate decreed that the great Duke of Wellington—you will see why and how, later on—should be unconsciously the direct cause of my adopting the profession of journalism.

CHAPTER V.

SOME OF MY MOTHER'S FRIENDS.

Donizetti and his Pathetic End—His Kinsman and the Sultan—Bellini—Cherubini and the Ugly Tenor—At a Reception of the Countess of Blessington's—Harrison Ainsworth—Louis Napoleon—Theodore Hook and his Talk—Thomas Campbell—Haynes Bayly—Malibran—Balfe—A Second-rate Tragedian—Miss Helen Faucit—The "Masters Farren"—Tyrone Power—Fieschi.

A LONG panorama stretches before my mind of the famous people who used to visit my mother in 1835–36. Donizetti, the composer of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and a host of other tuneful operas, I am not quite certain of having ever seen; but he was in London during one or both of the years just named, and I am tolerably certain that my mother knew him, since she has often described him to me as a strange, absent, wistful-looking man with his hat always very far back on his head; and that account exactly corresponded with the one afterwards given me by Madame Puzzi, the wife of the celebrated harpist, who knew the composer intimately. I suppose that I must not call him a great one, and that such operas as *Marino Faliero*, *La Favorita*, *Don Pasquale*, are only "tuney" productions, sparkling, it is true, with melody, but quite destitute of Wagnerian erudition. It is certain that he wrote a great deal too much, and that he eventually succumbed to paralysis of the brain. I remember reading that he

was for some time an inmate of a *maison de santé* in the Avenue Chateaubriand; Paris, and that he used to sit all day by the fire wrapped in a large cloak—and possibly with his hat at the back of his head—and mechanically murmuring, "Don Sebastian, Don Sebastian!" This was the title of one of his latest operas which had been somewhat harshly treated by the musical critics. It was not, however, in Paris that he died. He was taken back to his native Bergamo, where he passed away at scarcely more than fifty years of age. I believe he had a brother, or at all events a near kinsman, who was leader of the private band of the Sultan Mahmoud of Turkey.

They used to tell a droll story at Constantinople of the Padishah and his bandmaster. Mahmoud was the first Sultan who seriously set himself to the task of introducing European reforms into his empire. His predecessor, Selim, had endeavoured to bring about such changes, but was assassinated for his pains. Sultan Mahmoud got rid of the janissaries by the same rough-and-ready process adopted by Peter the Great when he wished to free himself from the Strelitzes, and by Mehemet Ali when he thought that he could dispense with the services of the Mamelukes—namely, by massacring them to the last man. Then, having reorganised his army on the European model, the enterprising Sultan Mahmoud compelled his pachas to relinquish their turbans, their beards, and their flowing robes for black frock-coats and red fezzes. He encouraged a French manager to open a theatre for

the performance of opera and ballet at Pera; and for his own private delectation he imported an orchestra of musicians from Italy, and conferred the conductorship on Signor Donizetti, as aforesaid.

The first performance of the Sultan's band was a very grand function. It took place in one of the largest saloons of the palace; and a contingent of the ladies of the harem were privileged to listen to the concourse of sweet sounds through a gilt *grille* or perforated screen. The band played melody after melody from Rossini, Auber, Meyerbeer, and Donizetti himself. They played marches, fantasias, and galops; but their efforts only drew from the Commander of the Faithful a series of dissatisfied yawns and grunts, eventually followed by unmistakable symptoms of a disposition on the part of his Imperial Majesty to sleep and eke to snore. Then there was a brief recess, during which the musicians proceeded to tune up their instruments. The Sultan started from his divan in an ecstasy of delight, and clapped his hands with glee. "*Mashallah!*" he cried, "that is grand, that is superb. *Let the Giaours play that tune over again.*" Well, there is no accounting for tastes. Was not George the First extremely partial to bad oysters?

Bellini, the composer of the *Puritani*, of *Norma*, and of the *Sonnambula*, I am certain that I saw once at my mother's house; but it must have been very early in 1835, since in September of that year he died, aged only twenty-nine, at Puteaux, near Paris. He was buried in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, and

the funeral mass was celebrated before an immense congregation of distinguished people in the church of the Invalides, Paris. It had been intended to perform the grand funeral mass of Cherubini, but for some reason or another the ecclesiastical authorities interfered to prevent this performance; and the musical part of the service consisted only of the awful *Dies Iræ*, superbly executed by Lablache, Tamburini, Ivanoff, and others. We shall meet with these great artists at a later stage of this book.*

My remembrance of Bellini is of a very young man with long auburn hair and large blue eyes, reclining on the carpet with his head on the cushion of an arm-

* Cherubini, the severely classical composer, to whom Napoleon the Great had a strange aversion, although he was fain to acknowledge his great attainments, was director of the Royal Conservatoire of Music during the Restoration, and gained a not very enviable reputation for the harshness and *brusquerie* with which he habitually treated the pupils and even the professors. Among the pupils was the well-known Hector Berlioz; and on someone remarking to Cherubini that Berlioz did not like the fugue, he replied pithily, "And the fugue does not like Berlioz." His general reply to any kind of request was a gruff and emphatic "No"; and in connection with these chronic negatives an amusing anecdote is told. A young tenor-singer, whose misfortune it was to be hideously ugly, waited on the Director one day and asked to be allowed to give him a specimen of his vocal powers. For a wonder his application was met by a sulky nod of acquiescence. He sang, and sang superbly. There came another nod, accompanied by something like a snort of satisfaction. Then came a pause, which after a minute or so was broken by the youthful vocalist asking, in faltering accents, whether he might eventually hope for an engagement at the Grand Opera. "No!" thundered the Director. "But, M. Cherubini——." "No!" The disconsolate artist was slowly departing when Cherubini rose, took him by both arms, and looked him fully in the face. "I am sorry," he said, "very sorry; but, *mon cher*, do you think that the Opera could get up a company of ourang-outangs to sing with you?"

chair, while my mother, at the piano, was playing and singing in her sweet mezzo-soprano voice the immortal "*Che farò senza Euridice?*" from Glück's *Orfeo*. During the season, when I am in town, I never see *Orfeo* advertised for performance but I hasten to the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, to listen once more to the bewitching lyric, rendered all the more enchanting since it has been sung by that consummate *cantatrice* and our dear friend, Giulia Ravogli; but in addition to the delight which I derive from the song and the singer, "*Che farò?*" always brings back the bright phantom of Bellini and my mother. He must have been, I should say, a beautiful man, even as Johnson churlishly admits Milton to have been beautiful in his youth; and I believe that on the whole children remember the beautiful much more vividly than they do the ugly. Ugliness frightens them, and they do not wish to recall the terrible.

My mother went very much into society at this period; and on rare occasions—as a small boy with an already well-stored memory, and with a certain capacity for reciting from Shakespeare, Molière, and Racine—I was permitted to accompany her to the mansions of the proud. I remember in particular being taken one evening to a reception at Gore House, Kensington, the residence of the Countess of Blessington, a mansion of which I shall have to say a good deal in the course of these pages. I think that, on the evening in question, there were present, among others, Daniel Maclise the painter and Harrison Ainsworth

the novelist. The author of "Jack Sheppard" was then a young man of about thirty, very handsome, but somewhat of the curled and oiled and glossy-whiskered D'Orsay type. The king of dandies was not present on the evening when I went to Gore House; so that it is at second-hand that I tell the anecdote of Lady Blessington placing herself on the hearthrug between D'Orsay and Harrison Ainsworth, and saying that she had for supporters the two handsomest men in London. Her ladyship herself was an exceedingly comely dame, who used to make up somewhat like Mrs. Siddons as Queen Katharine in *Henry VIII.:* particularly with respect to a band of lace or cambric which she wore passing under her chin from one temple to another. Great stateliness of mien, as well as beauty of features, are requisite to make such an accessory to costume attractive, or even tolerable; to the majority of ladies in these days, the Siddons or Blessington band might present unpleasant associations with the toilette of the tomb.

One of the guests at Gore House was a personage whom I was destined to see very often afterwards in active life. A short, slight form he had, and not a very graceful way of standing. His complexion was swarthily pale, if I may be allowed to make use of that somewhat paradoxical expression. His hair struck me as being of a dark brown; it was much lighter in after years; and while his cheeks were clean-shaven, the lower part of his face was concealed by a thick moustache and an "imperial" or chin-tuft. He was

gorgeously arrayed in the dandy evening costume of the period—a costume which to some up-to-date critics might seem preposterous; but which others, comprising, I should say, Mr. Oscar Wilde, might deem comely and tasteful and worthy of revival. However, I may have to say a good deal about the dandies of the past before I finish my first volume, so I will only note one item in the evening dress of the *élégant* with the big brown moustache and imperial whom I saw at Gore House. He wore a satin "stock," green, if I am not mistaken; and in the centre of that stock was a breast-pin in the image of a gold eagle encircled with diamonds. I am trying to be throughout these pages as strictly accurate as I possibly can, but I am not prepared to declare with certainty whether the eagle in the young gentleman's stock had closed or outspread wings. They should properly have been closed; since the bird of Jove with outspread wings is the cognisance of Prussia, of Russia, and of the United States; whereas the eagle with the closed wings was borrowed from the Roman standards to be the emblem of Imperial France; and the young gentleman with the satin stock and the diamond breast-pin was none other than Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, Pretender to the throne of France. It must have been shortly before or shortly after his madcap escapade at Strassburg that I first saw the Prince.

Was Theodore Hook, I often ask myself, one of the guests at Gore House? I asked myself again the

question in one of the empty saloons of the mansion in 1850, just when it was about to be swept and garnished, and converted into a restaurant by Alexis Soyer, the renowned *chef* of the Reform Club. Never mind! I know that Theodore often used to visit my mother, and I used to experience much boyish delight at seeing, from our first-floor balcony in the Quadrant, the witty author of "Gilbert Gurney" alight from his cabriolet and hand the reins to his "Tiger Tim," who had just jumped down from his footboard behind the equipage. He was the real Tom Ingoldsby "Tiger Tim," "tallest of boys and shortest of men." Theodore Hook was then a portly middle-aged gentleman, but who still managed to keep something of a waist within the confines of his tightly-buttoned frock-coat. He was very rubicund of countenance, and had, perhaps, the closest and bushiest of whiskers that I can remember to have seen. I have heard him sing and play in our drawing-room; and it was simply bliss to an intelligent and observing child to listen to his *beau parler*, his flow of brilliant, witty, but not cynical talk.

Thomas Moore the poet I never beheld in the flesh, although, of course, my mother often met him at Lansdowne House, and at other great mansions in town or in the country. I saw Thomas Campbell, author of "The Pleasures of Hope," "Ye Mariners of England," and "The Last Man," only once. He was pointed out to me in the Mall of St. James's Park by my eldest brother Frederick. A trim, dapper

little man was Mr. Thomas Campbell, with a large shirt-collar, a tail-coat, striped pantaloons, and shoes with silk bows. Had gaiters been substituted for these, he would not have been at all unlike one of Seymour's Cockney sportsmen. Haynes Bayly, on the other hand, novelist, poet, and song-writer, was an intimate friend. I remember that he used to sing a song called "Out, John, Out, John, What Are You About, John?" and another most humorous ditty entitled "A Gent in Diffs." As a matter of fact, he had not long before been a gentleman in difficulties himself; since, having spent a considerable fortune derived from his father, a prosperous solicitor of Bath, he had been fain, under the pressure of writs of "ca. sa." and "fi. fa.," to take refuge in the tents of Kedar, that is to say, at Calais or Boulogne. But in 1835-36 he had come to the surface again. He, too, was a dandy, and a cultured, high-minded gentleman to boot.

I spoke of Marie Malibran in my last chapter; but I have now to revert to that gifted songstress in connection with one of the first operas I ever saw at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. This was the *Maid of Artois*, in which the part of the heroine was sung by Malibran. The composer was Michael William Balfe, with whom and his wife and family we afterwards became extremely intimate. Balfe, throughout his career as a composer, was subjected to a great deal of adverse criticism; and in the criticisms of the *Maid of Artois* he was very roughly treated in the newspapers. One genial scribe

observed that the instrumentation from first to last was a continual clatter of drums, cymbals, trumpets, horns, and trombones. "For these instruments," added the kindly critic, "Mr. Balfe has a special predilection; and as if they were not sufficient, he has added an enormous ophicleide to the band which absolutely blows one out of the house." Nor was the censor much more courteous to Malibran, whose acting, he observed, was so turbulent as to cause her to be "completely blown," and to render her singing "a tissue of melodious screams."

My own most distinct remembrance of the *Maid of Artois* is that the superb singing and acting of Malibran nearly sent me wild with delighted excitement. There was a chorus, too, called "*Vive le Roi!*" which still dwells in my mind from the amusing circumstance that the chorus singers shouted at the top of their voices "Vive le *Raw!*" This also affords an illustration of how in some cases one's memory may be abnormally retentive. I happened to tell this "*Vive le Raw!*" anecdote in print not long ago, when up started an obliging soul—there are still obliging souls—who gravely doubted the truth of my assertion, seeing that I was only seven years old when the *Maid of Artois* was first produced. Fortunately for me, a gentleman well over seventy years of age was good enough to write to me and inform me that he had a clear recollection of the first night of the *Maid of Artois* and of the "*Vive le Raw!*" incident. The tenor was Temple-

ton and the basso Henry Phillips, who in the second act sang the beautiful ballad, "The Light of Other Days has Faded," a melody which I sincerely hope that posterity has not let die. The words of this lovely song were shortly afterwards mercilessly burlesqued in one of Gilbert Abbot à Beckett's burlesques at the St. James's, as "The Coat of Other Days is Faded."

In October, 1836, Balfe was himself singing at Drury Lane in his own opera, *The Siege of Rochelle.* After the opera, a strangely grotesque performance, which was intended to be pathetic, took place. It was entitled "A Grand Commemoration of the Departed Genius of Music, Commencing with a Monody Recited by Mr. Cooper." John Cooper, commonly known as "Jack," was a second-rate tragedian—he sometimes played comic parts, however—whom in the 'forties I recollect very well as playing Henry VIII. to Macready's Cardinal Wolsey. He was a careful man; and it was rumoured that in addition to the savings he had amassed during his career as an actor, he had made a good deal of money in the pig-jobbing line. He had a curious intonation, and I can still hear mentally a line of his as Henry VIII.: "What *poiles* of wealth hath he not accumulated." He was the only actor, so far as I know, who ventured to address Mr. William Charles Macready as "Macready," *tout court.* Cooper had been playing in the broad farce *High Life Below Stairs;* but he pulled off his red wig, dressed himself in evening attire, and with a white

handkerchief in his hand, stalked on to the stage and delivered his lines, which preceded a number of panoramic views painted by those eminent scenic artists William and Thomas Grieve. Thomas Grieve lived long enough to paint a portion of the scenery in a burlesque of my own called *Wat Tyler*, which my old friend John Hollingshead brought out at the Gaiety Theatre at Christmas, 1869. The panoramic views concluded with a picture of the Collegiate Church of Manchester, wherein was sung the Requiem of Malibran, which proved to be a *pot-pourri* of operatic odds and ends winding up with a finale borrowed from Meyerbeer. The poor *diva* had died at Manchester at the end of September.

You will have been enabled to judge from what I have already written that, when quite a little boy, I was in the habit of keeping what in the present day would be considered shockingly late hours for a juvenile. Perhaps you may labour under the impression that my childhood was passed in Bohemia. If that was really the case it was a most splendid Bohemia; and my mother saw a great deal of the palaces and castles of Prague. As regards myself it was a studious Bohemia: my studies being varied by seeing and hearing all kinds of celebrated people of both sexes, and by being very frequently taken to the play. For example, it must have been in 1836 that I first saw that gifted actress Miss Helen Faucit, who has long been the highly esteemed wife of Sir Theodore Martin. When she was living at Brompton, in the 'forties, my

mother gave her "for love" some lessons in French; and at the house where she resided, in Brompton Square —it was at the residence of that consummate comedian, Mr. William Farren the Elder—I remember seeing two spruce young gentlemen in Eton round jackets, snowy lie-down collars, and shiny top-hats, who, I was told, were the two Masters Farren. It makes me feel quite old now to hear of Mr. William Farren performing at the principal London theatres, and renowned as a finished impersonator of old men. Of the Irish actor Tyrone Power, in 1836, I have also a lively remembrance from his performance in an extravaganza called *Flanagan and the Fairies*, and in the farce of *The Irish Tutor*. Poor Power, it is well known, perished in the full tide of his fame, in the ill-fated steamship *President*. I knew both his sons in later years; the eldest rose to be a commissary-general and to be knighted; the second, Harold Power, was a wonderful mimic, and the coadjutor of Edmund Yates in a diverting medley entertainment at the Egyptian Hall.

I am about to enter on a narration of theatrical matters on which I shall have to dwell in some detail; but ere I leave Regent Street, in 1836, I have just one little item to recall with reference to the notorious Fieschi, a morose Corsican, who had been a soldier in the *Grande Armée*, and who had attempted to assassinate Louis Philippe by firing at him from an upper window in the Boulevard du Temple an apparatus of gun-barrels fixed in a frame, to which was given,—

not for the first time in French history,—the name of the Infernal Machine. This bloodthirsty scoundrel, with two of his confederates, Pépin and Morey, were executed in the last week of February, 1836, and the execution was witnessed by my still living and flourishing friend Julius Mayhew, the last of a bright band of brothers, the sons of Mr. Joshua Mayhew, a well-known London, solicitor. The *cause célèbre* of Fieschi is too well known for me even to sketch the outline of his history in this place. I am telling what I know; but I do not wish to be suspected of "padding." Now, what I want to say about Fieschi is this: the villainous engineer of the infernal machine was, to a certain extent, hoist by his own petard—that is to say, he was badly wounded about the head by the explosion of some of the barrels of his death-dealing battery.

In the window of an artist's colourman, by the name of Barbe, in the Regent's Quadrant, there was exhibited —even before the guillotining of the would-be regicide —a wax mask of Fieschi enveloped in blood-stained bandages, as he may seem to have appeared lying on his pallet in the prison infirmary. The shop window with the mask of Fieschi was regularly visited by my sister and myself in our morning walks; nor did we fail, while trotting up and down Regent Street, to bestow our attention on a shop at the corner of Air Street, where there was a grand show of sculpture in Carrara marble and alabaster. That fine-art warehouse may have disappeared long ago, but the artist-colour shop of Lechertier-Barbe—on the left-hand side, close

to the County Fire Office—continues to be a flourishing institution. I used to buy my paints and brushes there in 1840. In 1836 I was only a peeper-in, but not a customer. I have dealt at the house at intervals ever since. I bought some *conté* crayons there last February, and I should say that the house of Lechertier-Barbe has few older customers than G. A. S.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Braham—Nerot's Hotel—The Royal St. James's Theatre—First Performance of *Agnes Sorel*—Morris Barnett in *Monsieur Jacques*—London "Not such a very Big Village": Two Anecdotes—Mrs. German Reed—*The Strange Gentleman*—*The Village Coquettes*—*Artaxerxes*—A Child who wanted to be Left Alone—*The Beggars' Opera*—My Mother's Parts—Dancing the Cachuca—Braham's Sons and Daughter—Mrs. Stirling—Dickens and the Dramatisation of "Oliver Twist"—The Importance of Little Things: Turning an Honest Guinea—The Regent's Park Colosseum—Its Variety Entertainments and Drinking Bars.

It was at the St. James's Theatre Royal that my mother resolved to return to the stage and essay her fortune, not exclusively as a singer, but also as an actress. The St. James's had been built in 1835, from a design by Beazley for the celebrated English tenor, John Braham, then about sixty years of age, whom my mother had known ever since the Waterloo time. Braham, as I remember him, was a rather short, stumpy gentleman with a Jewish physiognomy, and, notwithstanding his sweetness as a singer, a rather gruff-speaking voice. The St. James's was built at a cost of £26,000, on the site of a well-known, and historic, hostelry called Nerot's Hotel. The original Nerot is said to have been a French cook, who came to England in the reign of Charles II.; but I cannot find any mention of him either in Pepys, in Peter Cunningham, or in Wheatley. Old Nerot's had

a spacious, heavy staircase, with carved balustrades and panelled walls, decorated, possibly by Verrio or by Laguerre, with mythological paintings of Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, and Virorum. The front of the hotel was pierced with no fewer than twenty-four windows; and I call it historic for the reason that many of William Pitt's early letters to his mother are dated from Nerot's, and that it was often the scene of jovial carousals enjoyed by the festive sons of King George III.:—William IV., when Duke of Clarence, having a special partiality for the place. The St. James's Theatre was opened on the 14th of December, 1835, with an original operatic "burletta" by Mr. Gilbert Abbot à Beckett, entitled *Agnes Sorel*, the music being by Mrs. à Beckett, whose sister, Miss Glossop, sang in the "burletta." The laws relating to the drama were then in an extremely contradictory and chaotic condition. The great patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were fighting for their rights as monopolists of the "legitimate" drama; and the rest of the theatres were in a continual state of perturbation and perplexity as to whether they were infringing the law or not.

In a contemporary account of the opening of the St. James's I find the somewhat hyperbolic statement that "the house had sprung up with marvellous rapidity, but that it presented the most exquisitely perfect realisation of a theatre in point of shape, of elegance, of richness, of the most fanciful beauty, the truest comfort, and all the more solid advantages of hearing and seeing that could possibly be imagined." According

to the enthusiastic newspaper scribe, it was quite a fairy wonder, which had been modelled on the plan of the theatre at the Palace at Versailles; and the writer went on to express a hope that even as the sumptuous Opera House erected by the *Grand Monarque* was constantly filled by the beauty and fashion of France, so Braham, in his palatial theatre in King Street, St. James's, might find equally magnificent patrons.

The cast of *Agnes Sorel* included not only Braham and Miss Glossop, but also Morris Barnett and Miss P. Horton. The first-named actor was a remarkably clever man—a Hebrew of the Hebrews, with a pronounced musical faculty and extraordinary powers of mimicry. These last were curiously illustrated in that which was Morris Barnett's most popular and most artistic performance—the part of the hero in a little domestic drama called *Monsieur Jacques*, a translation from a French piece entitled *Le Pauvre Jacques*. Barnett had to portray an old and distressed Italian musician, vegetating in a mean lodging in England, where he is victimised by a rapacious and rascally landlord, who, getting the unfortunate *maestro* into his debt, cozens him out of the "scores" of the operas which he has composed and passes them off as his own. Morris Barnett's broken English was marvellous; and his delivery alternately moved his audiences to laughter and to tears. His humorous allusion to his two shirts, "Ven von is vets se ozere is dry," used to set the house in a roar; while everybody fairly sobbed at the musician's lamentations for the loss of his operas, and

the exquisite pathos of his ultimate meeting with a long-lost daughter and his restoration to wealth and happiness. *Monsieur Jacques* was supposed to have been of Sicilian extraction; but Morris Barnett's broken English was that, not of an Italian, but of a Frenchman. To add to the whimsicality of the thing, I may add that his knowledge of French, either literary or colloquial, was extremely slight; and I believe that he had gone down to Leicester Square and Soho for a systematic course of lessons in broken English from some Gallic denizens of the modern Petty France; so as to enable him to bring his powers of vocal mimicry to bear on the part of the distressed composer. Some years afterwards Morris Barnett relinquished the stage for the profession of journalism, and was for a long time the dramatic critic either of the *Morning Herald* or the *Morning Post.*

I have always maintained not only that London, about the immensity of which we are continually prating, is not such a very big village after all, but that life itself, although it may be a very brief or a very protracted drama, does not present to us a very numerous *dramatis personæ.* This doubtless heterodox doctrine I will illustrate by two little anecdotes touching the Barnetts. Morris had a brother named Benjamin, an actor, who about 1855 was playing at the Lyceum Theatre. He took a benefit at that house; and one day came to see me at the office of a little periodical which I was editing in a dark *passage* called Exeter 'Change, of which I shall have

something to say later on. The object of "Benj." Barnett's visit was to remind me of my early acquaintance with his brother, and to ask me if I would play the part of the rapacious and rascally landlord in *Monsieur Jacques*, in which he (B. B.) was about to play his brother's *rôle*. It so happened that, although from my earliest youth I had been familiar with the world behind the scenes and had fulfilled all kinds of theatrical duties, I had never in my life trodden the boards of a public stage; but, as I will show by-and-by, I had been more than once engaged in private and school theatricals. Still the humour of Benjamin Barnett's proposition tickled me; and I acceded to his request: stipulating only that I should be announced in the bills as "Mr. William Watling, his first and last appearance on any stage." Mr. Watling was an eminent manufacturer of pork pies of the period; and I hope that he did not think it impertinent on my part to have temporarily usurped his surname. As to the announcement of the appearance being my first and last one, I cautiously made it in view of the contingency of some spiteful dramatic critic saying that I was an extremely bad actor, and that I had much better abandon the pursuit of the Thespian art.

And now let me venture upon a brief illustration of the *Ananke*. We only had two rehearsals of *Monsieur Jacques*. Our heroine—the musician's long-lost daughter—was a tall, elegant, graceful young actress, Miss Murray, who was afterwards a member of Charles

Kean's company at the Princess's and of whom I was very fond—fond I mean in a brotherly sense: because she had been beautifully kind and sympathetic to my dear sister Gussy in her last illness. The poor child died of consumption in 1849; she was the last of five of my sisters who had been carried away by that dreadful malady. Now and again during the rehearsals I noticed that Miss Murray was talking to a lady at the back of the stage; but it was so dark that I could not discern who the lady was or what she was like. Some five years afterwards to my great comfort and joy, I entered into the state of matrimony; and shortly after our honeymoon my wife told me, laughingly, that she had seen and heard me speak years before I had been formally introduced to her. "Where?" I asked her in amazement. "Well;" she replied, "it was at the Lyceum Theatre when they were rehearsing *Monsieur Jacques*. I was at the back of the stage and was watching you flirting with Miss Murray, who was a great friend of mine." Of course I was not flirting: it was "all in the piece," as Macready was wont to say, when actresses complained that he had clenched and pinched their arms black and blue.

Now for a fresh example of the comparative smallness of the World of London. We did not keep house when we were first married; indeed, I had not money enough to furnish the smallest of cottages; and the new Hire System had not yet been invented; so for two or three years we lived in furnished apartments in and about Brompton—in Brompton Row, in Sloane

Street, in Pelham Crescent, and in Brompton Square. The last set of lodgings was in a house kept by a portly lady who told us that her name was Barnett. "Any relation of Mr. Morris Barnett?" I asked. "I am the widow," she replied, "of that celebrated and gifted, but misguided man." In what way poor Morris was misguided I am sure that I do not know. The last time I saw him it did not seem that the world was using him very kindly. He was managing a company of Marionettes which Mr. Simpson, the lessee of Cremorne Gardens, was running at a little theatre close to the Adelaide Gallery in the Strand; and this theatre was subsequently transferred to Chelsea. I don't think Morris Barnett absolutely pulled the wires; but he was certainly the mouthpiece of Mr. Simpson's puppets.

You will remember that in the cast of *Agnes Sorel* I mentioned the name of Miss Priscilla Horton; that graceful and melodious burlesque actress was afterwards to become Mrs. German Reed, so pleasantly known to modern entertainment lovers in connection with the delightful Gallery of Illustration. I also recollect that there played and sang in *Agnes Sorel* a very handsome young fellow with a silvery tenor voice called George Barker. He had been—so my mother used to tell me—one of the pages of the eccentric Lady Caroline Lamb; but I am not aware whether he was the identical youthful servitor whom her ladyship in a fit of passion once knocked down—an occurrence which led Thomas Moore the poet to remark, that he saw no harm in a lady of

literary tastes "doubling down a page now and then." George Barker afterwards developed into a singer of considerable repute, and was a man about town of some pretensions to fashion. He drove his cabriolet, as Theodore Hook did.

Braham's first season lasted little more than three months; and he then let the theatre to the celebrated French actress, Madame Jenny Vertpré, for the performance of French plays. Braham, however, reopened the house in September, 1836; and it was then, and in the succeeding year, 1837, that my mother was most frequently before the public, but quite as much as a vocalist as an actress. Of the pieces performed during these two years I especially remember the farce of *The Strange Gentleman*, an adaptation of one of the "Sketches by Boz," made by the writer of the "Sketches" himself, Charles Dickens. The author of "Pickwick" also wrote the libretto for an opera called *The Village Coquettes*, the composer of the music of which was Mr. John Hullah, afterwards so widely known for his efforts to develop the musical education of the people. His detractors—who has not detractors?—used to call him "Mr. Hullabaloo." Then I recall Dr. Arne's melodious but now altogether shelved opera of *Artaxerxes*, which, in conformity with the ridiculous but indispensable procedure of the non-legitimate theatres, was styled "A Serious and Musical Burletta." The Artabanes was Braham himself; and the Mandane was a *débutante* by the name of Miss Rainforth, a young lady with a full voice, very

powerful on the upper notes, but not exceptionally forcible; below the line her intonation was imperfect, and she occasionally sang a little sharp; but her execution at once placed her on a level with Miss Shirreff and Miss Romer, the two leading English *prime donne* of the epoch. As usual in the operas produced during a season of lyrical decadence, a number of airs filched from other operas were foisted into Dr. Arne's production. Henry Bishop's "Fly, Soft Ideas," was there. Braham's own quartette, "Mild as the Moonbeams," was there, while from the mighty master, Handel, was borrowed, "Tears such as Tender Fathers Shed."

For two reasons do I preserve two particular reminiscences of *Artaxerxes* at the St. James's. One is a pleasant, the other a horrible memory. Childlike, and artistically childlike, I was fascinated by the glowing Oriental scenery, the gorgeous dresses, the dazzling stage jewellery. But, unhappily, I was endowed with a fatal musical as well as verbal memory. I was at the theatre either before or behind the curtain almost every night; and I soon learned to pipe in tolerable time and tune nearly all the songs in *Artaxerxes*. The, to me, miserable consequence was my being continually maternally commanded to sing "Water Parted," or "Tears such as Tender Fathers Shed," or "Thy Father, Away!" or "Monster, Away!" or some kindred ditty for the questionable gratification of grown-up ladies and gentlemen, my mother's friends and acquaintances.

I always hated recitations of any kind. I bitterly

resented in childhood the imputation of being an Infant Phenomenon. I have always had a lively aversion for my own writings and my own individuality; and it was with absolute loathing that I was forced to come forth on the carpet as a show-child and bleat forth songs or speeches or poetry. Very often I refused point blank to recite; and then I was scolded or punished as an obstinate young mule, which I am sure I was not; I was only a nervous, observant child, who wanted to be left alone; and they would not leave me alone. I am trying, in my sixty-sixth year, to be left alone; but I do not succeed much better than I did when I was eight years old. Parents foolishly vainglorious of the supposed cleverness of their children would do well to ponder.

We had the *Beggars' Opera*, too, at the St. James's, Braham as Captain Macheath and Miss Rainforth as Polly. Peachum was played by that remarkable impersonator of old men's parts, Strickland, whose real name was Van Buren; Lucy was assigned to a young lady named Stanley; and the irresistibly droll comedian John Pritt Harley, who was also stage manager at a salary of £30 a week, was Filch. Harley had a craze for collecting rare and curious walking-sticks; just as George Godwin of the *Builder* had a *penchant* for gathering together historic chairs. Whether my mother played Mrs. Peachum I fail to remember; but she certainly enacted the Princess Huncamunca in Fielding's burlesque operetta of *Tom Thumb:* the great Strickland being the King, and Harley, Lord Grizzle.

His death scene was excruciatingly funny; and after he had been mortally stabbed and was lying half prostrate on the stage singing the doleful dirge:

> "My body is a bankrupt's shop,
> My creditor is Death—grim Death,"

he would beckon to Stansbury, the leader of the orchestra, and in faltering accents ask him for the loan of his snuff-box. Mr. Stansbury, by-the-bye, was a capital leader, and managed the small but compact band admirably. In *Artaxerxes* we had the services of some really first-rate instrumentalists, including Harper on the trumpet and Grattan Cook on the oboe.

I am unable to give anything approaching a consecutive list of the pieces in which my mother took part at the St. James's. She was literally an actress of all work: bringing to parts, great and small, all the advantages of her wonderful versatility and her indomitable energy. I know that she played, and played very successfully, too, Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering;* but whether it was at the St. James's or not I am not quite certain. That she did impersonate Meg is impressed on my mind by the fact that on the first night she was about to dye her face, hands, and arms with a preparation of walnut-juice; and had she done so she would have been as brown as a berry for weeks; but fortunately there was present at rehearsals a then well-known melodramatic actress, Mrs. W. West, who timeously warned her of the perils of the stain in question, and instructed her in the making of some dark

cosmetic of the nature I should say of the modern "wig paste," which could be washed off after the performance by a liberal application of soap and water. So many and such widely differing *rôles* did she undertake that Braham once either seriously or jocularly suggested that she should appear as Gambia in *The Slave*. As the mother of five, my dear parent was naturally reluctant to assume a part, the costume of which necessitated not only the blacking of the hands and face, but the donning of a full suit of black tights with white calico "trunks"; but Braham was not to be discouraged, and he positively induced her to dance in some spectacular piece—the scene of which was laid in Spain—a *pas seul* called the Cachuca, which was then the rage in London, it having been introduced into England by a famous French opera dancer, Mademoiselle Duvernay, who not long since passed away, at the great age of eighty, and as the widow of Mr. Lyne-Stephens. She was a devout Roman Catholic, and magnificent in her liberality to Catholic and Protestant charities alike. Of course, my mother's Cachuca was rather a humorous paraphrase of Duvernay's; but it had an immense success. I can recall her, now, in a black satin bodice and full pink silk skirt reaching, decorously, almost to the ankles, and with many flounces of black lace; I can hear the clicking of the castanets and the shouts of applause from the audience. One night she was thrice encored; and as she left the stage, almost fainting from exhaustion, young Augustus Braham, one of the great tenor's sons and a lieutenant in a crack regiment, caught her

in his arms and carried her as though she had been a feather up two flights of stairs to her dressing-room.

Augustus Braham died only a very few years ago as Colonel or Major Braham, at St. Leonards. In his later years my acquaintance with him was pleasantly renewed. Braham's eldest son, John Hamilton Braham, began his career at one of the Universities; he was afterwards well-known in musical circles as a basso of considerable power. Charles, the third son, was gifted with a fine tenor voice and studied at Milan. His career as a professional artist was not very protracted; he had scarcely reached middle life when he found himself in the fortunate position of having nothing to do; and that nothing he did superbly: singing, however, from time to time his father's "Death of Nelson," at convivial gatherings, just to remind himself and his friends that he was a chip of the old block. All these three Brahams I knew intimately, but of the youngest son, Ward, I had only a very slight knowledge. The first time I met him was on board a steamer ploughing the Straits from Dover to Calais; and his fellow-traveller was a gentleman named Chichester Fortescue, who is now Lord Carlingford. I treasure the remembrance because I remember as a little boy being presented by the elder Braham in a pit-box at the St. James's to a young lady, his daughter, Miss Frances Braham, afterwards to become the universally beloved and revered Frances Countess Waldegrave. All the Braham family, I apprehend, are now dead.

I am privileged sometimes to meet a venerable lady, who, for all her years, is still, or was the last time I met her, as lively as Mrs. Keeley. She never fails to banter me about my age. "Own up," she says; "tell the truth; how long have you known me?" "My dear Madam," I reply, "I have known you since the year 1836, when I first admired your beauty and your genius at the St. James's, under Braham's management. You were attired, if I remember right, in a purple velvet jacket and continuations, pink silk stockings cross gartered, and a steeple-crowned hat adorned with many ribbons, with a slouched brim; two pistols adorned your sash, and in your right hand you carried a rifle. You were playing the part of the hero in a piece called *Pascal Bruno*, a translation, I believe, of Alexandre Dumas's melodrama of the same name." The young and handsome lady who was so brave in purple velvet and ribbons in the days when William IV. was King, is the extant and venerable Lady Gregory, once Mrs. Stirling.

We were great in burlesques at the St. James's under Braham's *régime*. I remember one on Shakespeare's *King John*. Then we had the operatic burletta of the *Quaker*: an excellent basso, named Adam Leffler, playing Steady. Among the operas, an English version of Weber's *Oberon; or the Elf King's Oath*—Braham playing *Huon of Bordeaux*—comes back to me; and I also remember another "farcical burletta," entitled *The Tradesman's Ball*, and a remarkably lugubrious burlesque extravaganza *The Revolt of the Workhouse*. The

New Poor Law was then in the dawn of its unpopularity; and public attention was being drawn with terrible force to the new Union Workhouse system in young Mr. Charles Dickens's novel of "Oliver Twist," which was then appearing in the pages of *Bentley's Miscellany*. Unless I gravely err, "Oliver" was dramatised at the St. James's (of course, without the author's consent) almost as soon as it was concluded in *Bentley;* and I have a dim remembrance of reading in some comic periodical of the time that so horrified was Dickens, who was present in a private box, at the wretched hash made of his powerful fiction, that at the conclusion of the second act "nothing but the soles of the boots of 'Boz' were visible on the ledge of his box."

Not without some fear and trembling do I tell this story; since I find in Forster's "Life of Dickens" an explicit statement on the part of the biographer that he accompanied Dickens to a representation of *Oliver Twist* at the Surrey Theatre, and that in the middle of the first scene the author laid himself down upon the floor in a corner of the box, and never rose from it till the curtain fell. It is just possible that the outburst of feeling at the Surrey may have been a replica of that at the St. James's.

But to return to *The Revolt of the Workhouse.* What the extravaganza was about I have not at present any definite remembrance; but I recollect that on the first night there was represented a kind of trick or transformation scene, simulating a field of turnips

which were changed into the heads of "supers" supposed to be paupers. These animated turnips rose through a trap-door to the stage, and then advanced in a cadaverous cohort to the footlights, crooning some doleful chant about the scantiness of their rations. I have always firmly believed that this transformation scene of the animated turnips gave Dickens, who was constantly behind the scenes at the St. James's at the time, the idea of Mr. Crummles's celebrated practical "set" of the "pump and tubs."

I must not omit to state that at one period of the Braham management there were given a succession of light French operas, with English *libretti*. Conspicuous among these was *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*, Braham taking the part of the historic postilion whose splendid voice brought him within apparently imminent peril of committing bigamy and being hanged. Another *opéra comique* which took a lasting hold on my youthful imagination was the *Ambassadrice*, the closing scene of which represented a private box on the pit-tier of a theatre, from which box a simulated stage with artistes performing, an orchestra with a real band, and a portion of the pit and the tiers of boxes opposite filled with real spectators, were visible. The invention was a most skilful, and to me a charming one; and my sister and I forthwith set to work to make a cardboard model of the scene, and to fill it with puppets moulded from bread.

You will think it, no doubt, very frivolous on my

part to recall so childish an incident; but I contend that the making of that little model was only an outcome of that art of paying attention to small things to which I have always devoted myself ever since I began to think; and I hold that if you pay strict attention to minor matters, you will find in the long run that many of them will prove distinctly useful to you. For example: about ten years after the production of *L'Ambassadrice* at the St. James's, a charming French *cantatrice*, of English extraction, Madame Anna Thillon, who had already taken the town at the Princess's in *The Crown Diamonds*, returned to the same theatre with a *répertoire* in which the first opera was *L'Ambassadrice*. Happening to meet in Regent Street my old friend, Mr. John Medex Maddox, in whose employment I had been from 1846 to 1847, and with whom I had remained on the friendliest terms, he told me that Madame Anna Thillon had come back, and that he was going to mount *L'Ambassadrice*. I mentioned to him that I had seen the opera at the St. James's in 1837, and again as a schoolboy in Paris in 1840, and that I knew very well how the last scene should be "staged," inasmuch as I had made a model of the "set" when I was a child. Maddox was delighted with the intelligence; and asked me to come up to my old quarters in the painting-room the next day and talk to the scenic artists. I showed them how I had seen the thing done in London and Paris. I sat in the pit during the rehearsal, and gave *viva voce* advice to the stage manager, the super-master, and

the master carpenter; and Maddox very handsomely presented me with an honorarium of one guinea, which I can assure you was at that period of the very greatest use to a young gentleman about town who was working exceedingly hard, but the intervals between whose breakfasts and whose dinners were very often uncomfortably prolonged. As a simple truth, I am of opinion that the intervals in question were not unfrequently between breakfast and breakfast, and that the dinners often fell out of the record altogether.

In 1837, and during a portion of 1838 the lyrical members of the company at the St. James's worked double turns. Braham, to his destruction, had become the lessee of a huge building in the Regent's Park called the Colosseum, which had been begun in 1824 from the designs of Decimus Burton. With its conservatories and adjacent garden it occupied about an acre. It was a ponderous edifice of polygonal form with a portico and a huge surmounting dome, and bore a much closer resemblance to the Pantheon of Agrippa than to the Colosseum at Rome. Here was exhibited, when I first remember the place, the gigantic panorama of London, planned by Mr. Horner and painted by Pariss. There was a Hall of Mirrors; there was a Gothic aviary; there were sham ruins and a grotto; and in particular I remember a great ascending room which would hold from thirty to forty spectators, and may be considered practically as the grandfather of modern English lifts. The invention I take to be an Italian one; since in the "Greville Memoirs" there

is a mention of an ascending room seen by Mr. Greville in a palace at Genoa some time in the 'thirties; but the device would seem to be a very ancient one.

To the miscellaneous attractions of the Regent's Park Colosseum, Braham added that which was practically a variety show or Music Hall, conducted on most enterprising lines. There was an ample stage, and the sages of the London County Council—should any of those wiseacres come across this book—will read with dismay that there was a bar at one extremity of the auditorium, and that waiters freely circulated among the rows of seats between the "turns," crying in sonorous tones: "Give your orders, gents." I am not aware whether smoking was permitted. Of the entertainments given I remember just three:—There was the "operatic burletta" of the *Waterman*, in which Braham played Tom Tug and my mother Mrs. Bundle. Then there was a wonderfully funny male singer who used to earn encore after encore in a song called, "Biddy the Basket Woman"; and as his popularity increased he added to his *répertoire* a patriotic ditty with the taking title of "The Bonny English Rose." The "Bonny English Rose" was of course, the youthful Sovereign who had just ascended the throne, Her Majesty Queen Victoria, whom may Heaven long preserve and bless!

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE BEDOUIN ARABS AT THE COLOSSEUM TO THE DAWNING OF PICKWICK.

Taking Tea with Arab Acrobats—The Perversion of Abdallah—End of the Colosseum—John Clayton—A Transformation: Hebe and Mrs. Gamp—Braham's Vicissitudes—Frances Countess Waldegrave—First Sight of Charles Dickens—The "Bozomania"—My Brother Frederick—A Young Gentleman's Dress in the Second Year of the Reign—At School in Paris.

THE last attraction of the Colosseum Music Hall was a troupe of Bedouin Arabs. Whether they were Bedouins or not I will not vouch for; but they were assuredly Arabs and devout Mahometans. They used to stand on each others' heads and tie themselves into knots, and vault and tumble, and perform other feats common enough in these advanced acrobatic days; but which in 1837 were considered to be little less than supernatural. There was one Arab in particular who was said to be a dervish. He was really the schoolmaster of the half-a-dozen little boys whom the so-called Bedouins had brought with them; and performed a trick which to my young mind verged on the miraculous. He would climb to the top of a long pole stuck on the stage; and then, clutching the pole with his right hand, would throw the rest of his body into space and assume a sitting attitude in the air. Whether this was done by means of a subtle arrangement of irons under his garments, or by sheer

trained muscular strength, I had no means of judging, but the posture was simply astounding.

The Sheik, or head of this band, was a Turk named Abdallah. All Turks are born gentlemen; and Abdallah, mere funambulist as he was, presented no exception to the rule. He was an intelligent, well-bred person, extremely observant and quick-witted; he spoke a little French when he arrived in England, and my mother taught him a good deal of English. The result of his tuition in our tongue was worth noting. He and his *troupe* lived in a roomy house in the Blackfriars Road, close to the Surrey Theatre; and my sister and I, accompanied by our nurse, Mrs. Esner, used to make frequent trips to the Surrey side of the water to take tea with Abdallah and his merry men, and play with the brown-skinned, white-turbaned little Arab boys. Their mammas had not, it is almost unnecessary to say, accompanied them to the land of the Giaours. The schoolroom was on the ground floor and was a lofty apartment, destitute of any kind of furniture, with the exception of a square of carpet on which the dervish pedagogue used to sit cross-legged. Before him was a circle traced on the floor, the area neatly covered with white sand; and round this circle the little scholars used to crouch on their haunches and trace letters and words in Arabic with their fingers in the sand. If they made a mistake the error was easily rubbed out and the sand tablet was soon ready to be written upon again. Their lessons in calligraphy were alternated by the singing in a monotonous chant verses of the Koran; and

altogether this little Mussulman school in the heart of London was a thing to be delighted in and to be wondered at.

The Arabs killed their own meat; and I suspect —tell it not to modern Inspectors of Nuisances— that the butchering was done in the back kitchen. The end of Abdallah, so far as we were concerned, was curious. He and his troupe left England for an extended continental tour, from which they realised, I believe, a great deal of money. Abdallah returned to London for a short time in 1841; he had abandoned his full Oriental garb and wore a black frock-coat and a fez, under which sumptuary conditions he might well have been mistaken for an attaché of the Ottoman Embassy. He had ceased to be a Sheik and called himself on his visiting cards "Mr. Abdallah." My mother used to tell us, laughingly, that the formerly strictly orthodox Moslem had become very fond of eggs and bacon; and that he did not by any means object to pork chops for lunch. Then we heard that he had married a widow lady of ample dimensions and means as ample, who kept a gin-palace in the Old Kent Road. I sincerely hope that there was not another Mrs. Abdallah at Cairo, or at Alexandria.

One last word about the ill-fated Colosseum, which, after passing through innumerable vicissitudes as a place of entertainment, was pulled down in 1876, and the site utilised for building purposes. In one of the houses in Albany Street, erected on the site of the old Music Hall, I used often to dine with

my deceased friend the well-known actor, John Clayton, who married a daughter of Dion Boucicault, and whose brother Claude, a clever painter of *genre*, exhibited under the name of Calthrop.* In John Clayton's dining-room, on many pleasant Sundays, I used to conjure up memories of the bygone Colosseum days; and in particular would I recall a rosy-cheeked barmaid with glossy brown tresses and laughing black eyes, with whom the young Brahams used to flirt outrageously. In 1873 I had a desperate illness, which kept me for seven months prostrate and unable either to write or to dictate a line. My malady was such an agonising one—affecting as it did my entire body, which was generally kept well painted with collodion flexile, or with flowers of sulphur, or with white of egg or Canada balsam—that my kind medical attendants, Dr. Anstie and Dr. J. P. Steele, were afraid to move me to my bedroom upstairs; and my couch of misery was fitted up in the dining-room. I suffered, as a *bonne bouche*, horribly from insomnia, and, rebellious to the most potent narcotics, was more or less sleepless for weeks. Of course I had a day-nurse and a night-nurse. The nocturnal attendant was a chubby female of about fifty years of age. Generally speaking, she was thoroughly incompetent. She had been warned, however, by some doctor that she should shake the medicine-bottle before administering the potion to the patient, but unhappily she gave too literal a reading to this precept; and she was continually agitating draughts

* Calthrop was John Clayton's real name.

which did not require shaking at all. She had another little habit rather inconvenient to a patient who was frequently in the habit of going, through sheer bodily anguish, into convulsions. Mrs. G—— (Gamp was not her name, but it might have been) was subject to the most extraordinary "expositions of sleep" that I ever was aware of. No sooner, as a rule, had she arrived and partaken of a copious supper, than, watching her opportunity when I had closed my eyes in one of a hundred attempts to snatch half-an-hour's slumber, she would dispose her substantial legs on a chair and fall, at once, into a sound sleep. Presently she would snore; and then I would swear so vigorously that she would jump up in her sleep like a jack-in-the-box, and exclaim, "Lawks a mussy me, the dear good gentleman's a-goin' off his head!" Of course, she always stoutly denied that she had been to sleep at all. She had, however, her waking moments; and one night she told me that in her youth she had been a barmaid at the Colosseum, and much noted for good looks—"which Capting Horgustus Braham was always horderin' champagne to drink her 'elth!" To think of the bright-eyed, brown-haired Hebe of my boyhood transformed into Mrs. G——, who might have been Mrs. Gamp!

John Braham left the St. James's Theatre at the close of the season of 1838, comparatively speaking a ruined man. When he assumed the management of the beautiful house in King Street and the huge edifice in the Regent's Park, he must have been very wealthy;

but his vast fortune had been swallowed up in the vortex of a disastrous adventure. They say that there are three almost infallible ways of getting rid in a very brief space of time of a large fortune—namely, to start a newspaper, to keep a steam-yacht, and to run a theatre; but I think that I will back the theatre as the easiest and the swiftest means for the conversion of pieces of silver and pieces of gold into dry leaves, or into Receiving Orders from the officials of the Court of Bankruptcy.

Braham was not discouraged by what was practically bankruptcy. Although he was sixty-four years of age he buckled on his armour again, and once more sought the smiles of Fortune as a vocalist in the United States —where his popularity had not waned and where he made a prolonged and on the whole highly remunerative tour. The last time I heard him sing was at Brighton, in 1846, in an oratorio at the Town Hall; and there still lingers in my ear the memory of "Honour and Arms Forbid such a Fray," which he gave with superb effect. He was then seventy-two years of age. He died in peace and comfort in 1856: made happy in his declining years by the affectionate solicitude of his daughter, Frances, Countess Waldegrave. I had seen, as my readers have already been told, that *grande dame* in her early girlhood. She was not beautiful; but her face beamed with intelligence. The phases of her remarkable career are sufficiently well known; and it is unnecessary to dilate upon them beyond merely stating the facts that she was married

first to Captain Waldegrave; next to Earl Waldegrave; thirdly to Mr. Manners Sutton (the son of an archbishop of York), and fourthly to Mr. Chichester Fortescue (now Lord Carlingford). She was a most bounteous, kindly, accomplished, and liberal-minded lady. She was a kind of aristocratic Mrs. Thrale; and her historic home at Strawberry Hill had many of the characteristics of Streatham—minus, however, the presence of that "respectable Hottentot," Dr. Samuel Johnson.

I am afraid that I have lingered a little too long over the Braham epoch; but I may be forgiven for having done so, since in more than one sense the St. James's Theatre at least has been the keystone of the arch of my life. There I first saw, as a very young and eminently handsome man, Charles Dickens. His unsurpassed works of fiction are, I hope and believe, as widely read in these days as they were in 1837-8; but the present generation, I should say, can scarcely form an idea of the absolute *furore* of excitement which reigned in reading-England during the time that the monthly parts of the novels in the green covers were in progress of publication. We have all heard the story of the invalid whose doctor gravely told him that he feared that he, the sick man, could not possibly survive for another month; but who, as the physician was leaving the room, was heard to mutter to himself, "Well; at all events, the next number of 'Pickwick' will be out in a fortnight;" and there is another not quite so well known anecdote, related many years since by a writer in

Blackwood, setting forth how, when he, the writer in question, was a schoolboy, there suddenly occurred to him, one Sunday in church and in the middle of a very dull sermon, the memory of an exceptionally comic episode in "Pickwick," that impelled him to burst out in a prolonged and uncontrollable burst of laughter; which act of irreverent hilarity led to his being at once, and ignominiously, removed by the beadle—there were beadles in those days—from the sacred edifice.

Stories of this kind were as plentiful as blackberries in the early days of what people used to call the "Bozomania." Dogs and cats used to be named "Sam" and "Jingle" and "Mrs. Bardell" and "Job Trotter." A penny cigar, presumably of British make, was christened "The Pickwick." Gutter-blood publishers pirated the masterpiece of farcical fiction which was astonishing the English-speaking world; and we had the "Penny Pickwick" and the "Posthumous Memoirs of the Pic-Nic Club" in weekly numbers. Even the more respectable class of cheap periodicals, "Olios," "Parterres," "Mirrors," and the like, were not ashamed to print extracts, sometimes three or four pages at a time, from each monthly part published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. As for ourselves—I mean my own family in King Street, St. James's, where we lived on the first floor of a house right opposite the theatre, —my brother Albert, my sister Augusta, and myself, were content in the course of a couple of years to get the "Pickwick Papers," "Nicholas Nickleby," and

"Oliver Twist" by heart. Then we used to "play at" Dickens, and dramatise his novels on our own private account. Many a time have I enacted *Bill Sikes* and murdered *Nancy*—otherwise my sister, in the back-bedroom. Then we set to work copying as well as we could George Cruikshank's illustrations to "Oliver," and Phiz's etchings to "Pickwick" and "Nickleby;" and, unless I am mistaken, my lamented friend Edmund Yates had a little old scrap-book of mine full of imitations in pen-and-ink of the etchings aforesaid. Across one of them, an exceptionally vile one —but this may not be in the book I gave Edmund —is written in a large bold hand, "This is not by G. A. S."

The writing, I apprehend, was that of my eldest brother Frederick, who was eight years my senior. He was a truly clever young man, and was exceptionally brilliant in mathematics; he drew and modelled ships admirably; he was a skilled chemist, and had a great fondness for graphic anatomy, and would have achieved eminence, I take it, either as a sailor, an engineer, or a physician; "instead of which," as the learned Judge remarked in the celebrated duck-stealing case, my mother determined that he should be a professor of music. So he was entered as a student at the Royal Academy of Music in Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, the male pupils of which establishment wore, I think, in 1838 an absurd kind of uniform dimly resembling that of a midshipman in the Royal Navy; but on the annual occasion of the Academy Ball—where

is that ball now? *Oïbò!* I am afraid that it is as defunct as Hans Breitmann's "barty"—my brother Frederick was permitted to disport himself in the height of the fashion, as fashion was understood in the second year of Her Majesty's reign.

Fashion sanctioned, in the case of a young gentleman of seventeen, a maroon tail-coat lined with white silk, and with gilt buttons; a prodigious shirt-frill, or *jabot* of Brussels lace; a crimson velvet waistcoat; two under-waistcoats—one of green watered silk and the other of white kerseymere—a high stock or cravat of black satin with a double breast-pin joined by a little chain of gold; tightly fitting mouse-coloured pantaloons with two rows of little mother-of-pearl buttons at the ankles; speckled silk socks, and varnished pumps with broad bows of black ribbon. Stay! "the costume was completed," as Mr. G. P. R. James used to say in his novels, by the young gentleman having his hair curled. The hair of every one of us was as straight as so many pendent strands of whip-cord; and my sister's own tresses, although they came down to her knees, were coal-black and totally innocent of a curl, and gave her, conjoined with her slight stature and dark complexion, the semblance of an Indian squaw. Yet on high days and holidays, not only the seniors, but we youngsters, were placed under the care of M. Théodore, the *coiffeur* of the Regent's Quadrant, whose skilful assistants sent us out into society with our normally straight locks curling like sable corkscrews. I can smell the

hot curling irons and the faint scent of the bears' grease now.

I was dreadfully afraid of my elder brother, who was not unfrequently apt to "pass the time of day" with me in the manner so graphically described to Roger Ascham by Lady Jane Grey in her account of her treatment by her relations: "Yea, presentlie, sometymes with pinches, nippes, bobbes, and other wayes which I will not name for the honour I bear them." I was, indeed, not very sorry when, after about eighteen months' study in Tenterden Street, my eldest brother was sent to Paris to be placed under the tuition of a then famous pianist named Kalkbrenner. But even under those circumstances my much-dreaded elder kinsman was only at the other end of a lengthening chain which eventually drew me along with it, across the Straits of Dover; since when I, myself, was sent to a public school—it was a day-school in Paris in 1839—I found myself an inmate of the same *pension* in the Rue de Courcelles in which my brother was a free and independent boarder.

Free and independent my brother Frederick was in most senses of the term, inasmuch as he had his own private sitting-room and bed-room, and could go out whenever he pleased; although the proprietor of the *pension,* M. Hénon, whom we boys used disrespectfully to call *le marchand de soupe,* would make some faint assertion of authority by inciting the *concierge,* who was known as *La Mère Thomas,* not to respond to my brother's summons at the bell, when he came

home at two in the morning. I did not see much of him during our stay under one roof. He was grown up and enjoying to the full all the pleasures of the Paris life of the period—and Paris in the eighth year of the reign of King Louis Philippe was, perhaps, even a gayer city than it is under the present second-rate music-hall and dancing-booth Republican *régime*—and sometimes so rarely did I see my relative that I was apt to imagine that he had forgotton the fact of my existence—not a very important fact, under any circumstances.

At the same time I had my revenge for the "pinches, nippes, and bobbes" of the Lady Jane Grey order. I was not an exceptionally vindictive boy; but most children have a liking for giving tit for tat, or a Roland for an Oliver when they think that they have been unjustly treated. My vengeance took a very mild form. My brother Frederick, thanks to his own talent and industry, and the scientific and technical instruction so sedulously imparted to him by Kalkbrenner, had become a splendid pianist—so said our friend the illustrious Thalberg; so said those wonderful mistresses of the pianoforte, Madame Pleyel, Madame Dulcken, and Mrs. Anderson. When he came back from Paris, he studied counterpoint and thoroughbass under G. A. Macfarren; but he had one inveterate and incorrigible fault—his ear was not quite true. In Paris, apart from his lessons with Kalkbrenner, he would practice on an average nine hours a day; and over and over again on summer afternoons, while I was playing ball in

the gravelled courtyard of the Pension Hénon, and could hear through the open window my brother pounding away at some abstruse piece of music, it was my fiendish delight to cry at the top of my voice, "False note, Fred; false note!" I used to give him a wide berth when next I met him, in view of contingent "pinches, nippes, and bobbes."

CHAPTER VIII.

NEWGATE NOVELS AND AN APOLOGY.

"Playing at Dickens"—Crown Court Alley—The Taste of the Age in Fiction—The Greenacre Murder—"Catherine": a Parody that Failed—Ainsworth's "Rookwood" and "Jack Sheppard"—Early Studies i Literature—Advice from Lord Brougham.

I HAVE told you that in King Street, St. James's—smiling victims of the delightful contagion of the Bozomania—we used to "play at Dickens," get him by heart, and copy the illustrations to his books. We did more than that. We used to buy twopenny Dutch dolls at a toyshop in a queer little alley, called, I think, Crown Court, which ran from King Street into Pall Mall; which puppets my sister used to dress up to represent Mr. Pickwick, the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, the elder Mr. Weller, Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz, and so on. The oddest of places was that Crown Court. Although I have a club in Pall Mall, and although, when I am in town, I often look in at the shop of my cigar merchant, Mr. Henry Wilson, opposite Marlborough House, full half a century has, I should say, elapsed since I have traversed the court in which is still, I suppose, the stage-door of the St. James's Theatre—a door which, in my early boyhood, I must have passed through hundreds upon hundreds of times.

Does old Crown Court still hold its own? Does

it yet harbour sweet-stuff shops, where they used to vend the beloved hard-bake, the succulent almond-rock, the delightful allycampane, the fascinating Bonaparte's ribs, the exhilarating brandy-balls—sweetmeats, I fear, which would be considered coarse in this refined age of chocolate creams and candied violets? There was a tinsmith's, too, in the old Crown Court; and I used to please myself with imagining that the original "Little Dust-Pan" had been manufactured there. I feel tolerably certain that the court comprised a rag-shop, with an effigy of "Aunt Sally" pendent over the door; and my olfactory memory still reminds me that the whole place smelt desperately of tallow-dips, soft-soap, and kitchen stuff. But for aught I know, the existing Crown Court may be quite a metamorphosed locality, full of the elegantly-appointed chambers of financial agents, or the offices of fashionable West End solicitors. Such a metamorphosis has, to my certain knowledge, come over another passage to the east, leading from King Street into Pall Mall, which passage was in 1838 called Princess's Place, and was one of the vilest dens of iniquity to be found at the West End.

It has not been without a serious and deliberate intent that I have dwelt on my personal experiences of the Pickwick fever, or "Bozomania." In the "Life of Cola di Rienzi," the last of the Roman Tribunes, I read: "*Fù da sua gioventudine nutricato del latte dell' eloquenza: buono grammatico, megliore rettorico, autorista buono. . . .*" I can with candour say

that from the time I first began to *study* I read only the works of good authors, and endeavoured to express myself grammatically; although I was never taught, and am at the present moment grossly ignorant of, the rules of English grammar; but I wrote a tragedy, in rhyming couplets, in the French language, before I was ten; and many years afterwards Alfred Wigan, the comedian, who was one of the most superb French scholars I ever met with, told me that there were very few mistakes either in quantity, in orthography, or in syntax in my juvenile tragedy of *Frédégonde*, the chief fault of which, he said, was its persistent bloody-mindedness. For this homicidal tendency there was a curiously sufficing reason. The literary taste of the age was to a great extent, as regarded fiction, of a sanguinary character. We had done with such ghastly mediæval romances as Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho" and Matthew Lewis's "Monk;" but there had, on the other hand, grown up in the public mind a strange and unwholesome fondness for works of fiction of which criminals of the most flagitious order were the heroes. I cannot help surmising that this morbid partiality for what I may call "Old Bailey novels" was due to the amazingly strong grasp which had been taken of the public curiosity by the revelations incidental to the murder of Weare by Thurtell; and to the forgeries of Fauntleroy the banker, who lived in a house in Berners Street, Oxford Street, which mansion is at present the Berners Hotel. Added to the grim

notoriety of the two tragedies enacted in the latter years of the reign of George IV., must be recalled an unutterably horrible deed of blood perpetrated at Christmas-time, 1837, by one James Greenacre, who murdered and mutilated in a most horrible manner the body of a woman named Hannah Brown.

At the period named we had gone to live for change of air at Pine-apple Villas, Maida Vale; and it was in an empty house next door to the one which, for a brief term, we had hired, furnished, that the mangled trunk of the murdered woman was discovered. The limbs turned up in different parts of London; and the head was found in the lock of one of the suburban canals. It subsequently transpired that the murderer had travelled in an omnibus with this head in a canvas bag on his knee; and the ghastly, and probably apocryphal, story was attributed to him that, on leaving the vehicle with his dreadful parcel under his arm, he had observed to the conductor that by right he ought to pay for two passengers. More than three months elapsed between the capture and the execution of the assassin; but during the whole of that time London was convulsed by a Greenacre fever, the minutest details of the tragedy being discussed in the politest society. Of course, Mr. Catnach, of Seven Dials, speedily improved the opportunity, and commissioned one of his hack-poets to indite a doleful ditty describing all the circumstances of the crime; which effusion was sung, with the result of a rich harvest of coppers, in most of the London thoroughfares.

I cannot find this tragic lay in Mr. John Ashton's "Modern Street Ballads," but I remember the first stanza of the song, which ran:—

> "Oh! Jimmy Greenacre!
> You shouldn't have done it, Greenacre;
> You knocked her head in with a rolling-pin,
> You wicked Jimmy Greenacre."

With Greenacre was associated an accessory after the fact: a woman named Sarah Gale; she was convicted and sentenced to transportation for life; and nearly fifty years after she left her country for her country's good, I heard in Australia some curious particulars concerning this Sarah Gale—particulars which confirmed me in the impression which had long dwelt in my mind, that Greenacre never intended to kill Hannah Brown, but that in the heat of a quarrel he had dealt her with a rolling-pin, or some other non-lethal weapon, a blow which had caused her to stagger and fall with her head against the corner of a table; and that the fall was a fatal one. The man to all appearance was a weak-kneed, faint-hearted, shambling creature, against whom, touching his antecedents, it could only be proved that, as a grocer in a small way of business, he had once been fined for adulterating his tea with chopped birch-brooms and sloe-leaves. His crime only recurs to me now for the reason that I am very much afraid that in King Street, St. James's, when we were tired of playing at Dickens, we also played at Greenacre; and I must unreservedly accept the responsibility of having constructed in cardboard a neat model of

the "Debtor's Door," Newgate, with the gallows, and a practically working drop; while, suspended from the cross-beam, was one of our twopenny dolls from Crown Court, dressed as we imagined Mr. James Greenacre would be attired on the morning of his being hanged. I little knew that I was destined in a professional capacity to see some of my fellow-creatures judicially strangled.

I repeat it was an age when novel-readers delighted in the felonious. Edward Lytton Bulwer had already thrilled the public with his thrilling but deleterious romances, "Eugene Aram" and "Paul Clifford." A writer in *Fraser's Magazine* had endeavoured—but all in vain—to stem the tide of bad taste by publishing a burlesque romance entitled "Elizabeth de Brownrigge," of which the heroine was a notorious harridan of Fetter Lane, who, according to Canning in the *Anti-Jacobin*, "whipped two female 'prentices to death and hid them in the coal-hole;" while Thackeray, then an almost unknown writer, bantered the Old Bailey school of fiction in his "Catherine: a Story," first published under the pseudonym of "Ikey Solomons, Junior"—the real Ikey having been a notorious receiver of stolen goods. Catherine was the Christian name of one Mrs. Hayes, who, early in the reign of George I., cruelly murdered her husband under circumstances to some extent corresponding with those which attended the slaughter of Hannah Brown by Greenacre. In particular the murderess cut off her husband's head and concealed it in the dock before a lime-wall near the Horseferry,

Westminster. The churchwardens of the parish caused the ghastly relic of mortality to be washed and the hair to be combed; and the head was set up on a pole in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the hopes of its being identified. It afterwards came to light that the accomplices of Mrs. Hayes—a certain Billings and one Wood—distributed the trunk and limbs of the murdered man in divers sequestered spots round London.

Unluckily for himself, the genius of William Makepeace Thackeray, whose intellect was already saturated with the literature bearing on the manners and customs of the early Georgian era, and whose powers of minute observation were Hogarthian, brought about in his manipulation of his story a consequence which he could scarcely have contemplated. The public soon forgot that they were reading a professed satire on Bulwer's Newgate novels; and they found themselves absorbed in, and fascinated by, a wonderfully realistic fiction, almost equalling Fielding's "Jonathan Wild the Great."

A queer kind of Nemesis in connection with this story was many years afterwards to dog the heels of the famous novelist. In "Pendennis" he most innocently, but most unfortunately, alluded incidentally to "Catherine Hayes, the murderess." It happened at that precise period that an Irish *cantatrice*, Miss Catherine Hayes, was enjoying well-deserved and widespread popularity; and the entire Irish nation were naturally proud of their gifted young countrywoman, who,

besides being an accomplished artist, was a lady of the most blameless character. A howl of indignation arose from the Hibernian press, which, by-the-way, had not forgotten Thackeray's "Irish Sketch-Book," and his scathing satire in *Punch*, "The Battle of Limerick." They wholly ignored Catherine Hayes the murderess, and they charged "the Big Blubber Man"—as, with other abusive epithets, they called Thackeray—with wilfully and scandalously libelling the fair fame of Miss Catherine Hayes the vocalist.

Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer, however, afterwards the first Earl of Lytton, was fated—although the shafts of "Ikey Solomons, Junior," and of the anonymous writer in *Fraser* of "Elizabeth de Brownrigge," failed to pierce his literary corselet—to be beaten on his own ground by another writer of fiction very much his inferior in genius; but who was nevertheless endowed with a considerable amount of melodramatic power, and who had acquired a conspicuous faculty for dramatic description. This was young Mr. William Harrison Ainsworth, who first essayed felonious fiction in his interesting but unequal romance "Rookwood," in which one of the leading characters was the notoriously coarse and crapulous highwayman and horse-thief, Dick Turpin. "Turpin's Ride to York," as a piece of word-painting, has been rarely, if ever, surpassed in the prose of the Victorian era. It is true that more than once it has been alleged that Harrison Ainsworth was not the writer of this astonishing episode; but that it was the composition of his friend Dr. William Maginn. As to

the truth or falsehood of this allegation I am wholly incompetent to pronounce; but looking at Ainsworth's striking and powerful pictures of the Plague and the Fire in his "Old St. Paul's," and the numerous studies of Tudor life in his "Tower of London," I should say that "Turpin's Ride to York" was a performance altogether within the compass of his capacity.

In "Jack Sheppard" he out-Newgated Bulwer's Newgate epics. Every student of criminal annals knows that John Sheppard, footpad and housebreaker, was a vulgar, squalid, illiterate, drunken scamp, whose only talent was one for breaking out of gaol. Ainsworth made him a dashing young blood of illicitly noble descent, who dressed sumptuously and lived luxuriously; but even had the novelist refrained from converting this brutish gaol-bird into a hero of romance, there was quite enough in the vigorous description of his escapes from Newgate, and the extraordinarily able illustrations thereof by George Cruikshank, to delight and enchant a public which had already been captivated by the murder and housebreaking scenes in "Oliver Twist," and especially by George's etchings of the death of Sikes, and of Fagin in the condemned cell. Harrison Ainsworth, as is well known, assumed the editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany* when the post was relinquished by Dickens, and "Jack Sheppard" followed "Oliver Twist."

And, now, in concluding that which may appear to you, patient readers, to be an intolerably lengthy and wholly irrelevant digression, but which is in reality

a kind of feeble Apology for my Life, I must recall that scrap in Italian from the "Life of Rienzi:" "From his youth he was nourished with the milk of eloquence; a good grammarian, a better rhetorician, well-versed in the writings of authors." I have already said that from the beginning of my being conscious of the possession of any intellectual faculties, I strove to read the very best writers whose works were accessible to me; and I was aided by my mother, who made me read Rollin's "Ancient History" and Volney's "Ruins of Empires;" while our intimate and affectionate friend Mark Beresford Whyte, barrister-at-law, whom we first knew in 1838, lent me Guizot's "Lectures on Civilisation" in French, and gave me Charles Lamb's "Essays of Elia" and Hazlitt's "Table Talk." With regard to rhetoric, I never had a formal lesson on elocution in my life; but when I was between twenty and thirty, Lord Brougham gave me *vivâ voce* some inestimably valuable instruction in the art of public speaking; and he was led to do so through his having heard me make a speech at a meeting of a Mechanics' Institute at Huddersfield in Yorkshire. I preserve a newspaper report of that speech. It turned up the other day in a folio volume of old journalistic cuttings; and I read it with horror, but without shame. It was full of tautology and of long-tailed words, and fundamentally was, I daresay, sound and fury, signifying nothing; but still, rhetorically, it was a speech which could be punctuated, and in which the nominative generally found the accusative case; and that it was a speech

and not a mere inconsequential babbling, was really due to the circumstance that, from my earliest childhood, my mother always insisted that I should express myself with clearness and precision, and always sternly reproved me if in conversation I did not employ the diction which she taught me to use in writing. I was not by any means a sententious or pragmatical child; but I could talk plainly and to the purpose, in three languages, before ever I went to school; and this habit of plain speaking got me often into dire trouble with my parent, who, although she deemed it necessary, from a literary point of view, that small boys should express themselves with lucidity, was naturally desperately angry when she found that she had unconsciously cultivated the embryo of a logical faculty in the urchin who as yet had never set eyes on the works of Dr. Isaac Watts or Archbishop Whately, and was given on most occasions to arguing the point with a lady who would not seldom resent the freedom taken with her by counter argument of a nature very inconvenient and sometimes dolorous to small boys.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE GREEN-ROOM.

Sir Michael Costa: Applause behind the Curtain—A Theory of the Origin of "Green-Room"—Edmund Yates and his Mother—Gilbert à Beckett—"Stock Authors": Planché, William Brough, Dion Boucicault—Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall—Miss Alison—The *Love Chase* at the Haymarket—Domestic Service Fifty Years Ago—A Generous Physician—My Mother's Illness and Benefit Performance.

I WAS familiar in days gone by with a good many theatrical green-rooms. I have had the *entrée* in my time to the *foyers* of old Covent Garden, of Drury Lane, and of the Haymarket. Of the green-room of Her Majesty's Theatre, the site of which disestablished temple of the lyric drama is now as desolate as the walls of Balclutha, I have no definite remembrance. There must have been some kind of green-room for the *corps de ballet*, and perhaps another for the ladies and gentlemen of the chorus; but the leading vocal *artistes*, both male and female, were, I am of opinion, in the habit, at the close of each act, of retiring to their dressing-rooms. I well remember that Sir Michael Costa, during his conductorship at Her Majesty's, used, when the curtain fell, to seat himself in a large *fauteuil* in the centre of the stage close to the curtain; where, for ten minutes or so, he would hold a kind of *levée*, bestowing judicious praise on the contraltos and the sopranos, the tenors, the

baritones, and the bassos for their exertions during the performance. The praise was valuable. It is not only before but behind the curtain that true dramatic and lyric artists require applause. It is as the air they breathe. If they have it not, they die. With the ballet and the shining lights thereof, Sir Michael Costa had nothing to do. His functions ceased with the finale of the opera; and the choregraphic music was under the control of the leader of the orchestra, usually the first violin, who, in my time, was François Cramer.

The green-rooms, however, which I most specially remember were those of the St. James's and of the old Princess's; and perhaps you will pardon me if, before I narrate my experiences of the apartments to which actors and actresses used to repair during the intervals of their parts in the play, I venture upon a brief digression as to what the word green-room seems to mean. If we possessed a work of so graphic and exhaustive a nature as M. Arthur Pougin's "Dictionnaire du Théâtre" we should be at no loss to find the derivation of green-room; but it remains for Mr. W. Moy Thomas, or Mr. Clement Scott, or Mr. William Archer to compile a Dictionary of the English Theatre. English lexicographers—who are, as a rule, dull-witted pedants, generally ex-schoolmasters, and who rarely possess any knowledge of the world—arbitrarily tell us that green-rooms are so called from having been originally painted or decorated with green. I can find no more substantial

authority for this statement than Theodore Hook's well-known sketch of the first green-room that he was ever privileged to enter. It was literally a "green"-room into which light was admitted by a thing like a cucumber-frame at one end of it: "It was matted, and round the walls ran a bench covered with faded green stuff, whereupon the *dramatis personæ* deposited themselves until called to go on the stage; a looking-glass under the skylight and a large bottle of water and a tumbler on the chimney-piece, completed the furniture of this classic apartment."

This is an undeniably graphic portrayal; yet I have known green-rooms the walls of which were decorated in white and gold, and which were upholstered in crimson or in blue. I have my own theory as to the origin of the term, and although I am aware that stern Professor Skeat has laid down the canon that surmises are not permissible in philology, I am bold enough to express my conviction that the dramatic retiring-room got its name from the circumstance that in the old days of the "legitimate drama" when, during the performance of a tragedy, the stage was always laid with a dark green cloth or carpet, this cloth, when plays, other than tragic, were being acted, used for convenience sake to be rolled up, set on end, and kept in the *foyer*, where it was easily accessible and was not in the way of the scene-shifters and the carpenters.

Touching the green cloth itself, I have another theory which I commend to the attention of the

coming compiler of "A Dictionary of the English Theatre." From the Restoration until the beginning of the reign of George III., and possibly a little later, it was the custom of the nobility and gentry to make gifts of their cast-off "birth-night" dresses or Court suits to actors who had been fortunate enough to gain their favour; and the tragedian who played Hamlet in a full-bottomed periwig, a coat of cut velvet, a brocaded waistcoat, and crimson-satin smalls, or he who enacted Macbeth in the full uniform of a captain in the Guards, did not care about spoiling the fine clothes with which his noble patron had presented him by falling on the bare and dusty boards; but preferred to give up the ghost decorously on a fair expanse of green cloth.

I very rarely go behind the scenes nowadays, and, indeed, I have almost lost my way through the stage-door; but I am told that green-rooms are not what they used to be, and that in some theatres the apartments where comedians, critics, and patrician patrons of the drama once foregathered have been converted, practically speaking, into annexes to the property-room. Things were very different in 1838-9 at the St. James's and the Haymarket. Let me endeavour to recall a few of the frequenters of the first-named *foyer*. My deceased friend Mr. Edmund Yates, in his graphic and kindly "Recollections and Experiences," speaks of being present at a performance of private theatricals at Charles Dickens's London residence, Tavistock House, some time in the 'fifties. He was accompanied

by his mother, the widow of the lessee and manager of the old Adelphi Theatre, Frederick Yates, whom I had seen in the part of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* late in the 'thirties, and who had been, herself, an actress of brilliant talent, especially distinguished as the heroine in the drama of *Victorine; or, I'll Sleep On It.* At the Tavistock House private theatricals Edmund's parent was seated next a tall, grey-haired gentleman, a very pleasant talker, who proved to be Mr. Gilbert à Beckett, the magistrate and wit. There are a few more cursory allusions to Gilbert à Beckett in my lamented friend's pleasant pages; but it does not appear that he enjoyed the personal acquaintance of an exceptionally gifted and amiable man, a ready and versatile writer, and a most intelligent police magistrate.

It was my lot to be acquainted with Mr. à Beckett in my very early boyhood; and I must first speak of him as an *habitué* of the St. James's green-room. When I first knew him as an intimate friend of my mother, he could scarcely, I should say, have attained the age of thirty. He was the son of a highly respectable solicitor in Golden Square; but whether he was a descendant of the Saracen maid and the merchant on whose romantic union the plot of the "Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman" was to all appearance founded, I am not prepared to say. Although he was a constant sayer of good things, I never met so nervously shy a wit as he was; but of the spontaneity of that wit I think that I can give a tolerably sufficing illustration in the anecdote that, having once

to reprove a rather prodigal young kinsman of whom, nevertheless, he was very fond, he told him that "he was going to the dogs, and that the best thing he could do would be to go thither and come back as soon as ever he could." The *mot*, to my mind, is as crisp as anything that Douglas Jerrold ever said.

I have an idea that à Beckett was what in the theatrical parlance of the time was termed "stock-author" at the St. James's—that is to say, he wrote extravaganzas, and occasionally farces and short dramas, for a stipulated weekly salary. Planché was in like manner "stock-author" at several London theatres; notably at the old Olympic under the Vestris management, and at Covent Garden under the sceptre of Vestris and Charles Mathews. For his subsequent Lyceum extravaganzas, written for Vestris and Mathews, he was, I should say, paid literally "by the piece;" but there was a stock-author for farces at the last-named house in the person of the late William Brough—the brother of Robert B. Brough—poet, dramatist, and wit, and uncle of that deservedly popular actress, Miss Fanny Brough. One of the last stock-authors of any note that I can remember in a first-rate London theatre was Dion Boucicault, who served Charles Kean at the Princess's in 1850-1, and who, while he was taking a weekly salary, wrote or adapted for the stage, among other pieces, *Louis XI.*, *La Dame de St. Tropez*, *The Vampire*, and *The Corsican Brothers*. I should say that in the end the iron of stock-authorship—the meagre weekly salary and

the deprivation of authorial rights—entered into Dion Boucicault's soul; since he was destined to bring about a tremendous revolution in the system of remunerating dramatists; and our leading playwrights nowadays have ample reason to be grateful to the astute author of *The Colleen Bawn*, who insisted that managers should pay their authors a large percentage on the daily receipts of the house. I hope that Mr. G. R. Sims makes as much as £5,000 by a comedy or a melodrama. For aught I know he may make a great deal more; but of this I am confident: that five-and-thirty years ago, and with all the popularity he justly possesses, he would not have earned as much as £500 by the very finest piece produced by his facile and sparkling pen.

I shall have a good deal more to say about Gilbert Abbot à Beckett in the course of these pages; but I may just mention here that he was called to the Bar, at which, I think, he rarely practised; and that after a long and brilliant career as a contributor of *Punch*, and as a leader-writer to the *Times*, he was appointed one of the stipendiary police magistrates for the metropolis. He died, much too soon for friendship, in 1856. All youthful as he was when I first knew him, he had had considerable journalistic and theatrical experience, and had been for a short time lessee of the Fitzroy Theatre (afterwards the Queen's, and then the Prince of Wales's), which, for more than a generation, was one of the unluckiest play-houses in London; but which was fated to have a career of almost unexampled prosperity

and celebrity under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft.

At the age of three or four and twenty, à Beckett had been proprietor and editor of a large number of short-lived periodicals, among which I may cite *The Terrific Penny Magazine*, *The Ghost*, *The Lover*, *The Gallery of Horrors*, *The Figaro Monthly*, and *The Figaro Caricature Gallery;* while, in a co-partnership with Mr. Thomas Littleton Holt, a gentleman whom I shall have frequently to mention later on, he had sought the favour of the reading public with *Figaro in London*, *The Wag*, *Dibdin's Penny Trumpet*, *The Evangelical Penny Magazine*, *Poor Richard's Journal*, and *The Thief*—the last an imitation of the Paris *Voleur*, and all of them clever and short-lived periodicals. There was a flux of cheap and ephemeral penny weeklies even in those far-off days, when there was a heavy paper duty, and a tax of no less than eighteenpence on every newspaper advertisement; and among the starters and editors of the usually disastrous little ventures, the most persistent and the most prolific were Gilbert à Beckett, three out of the seven Brothers Mayhew, and Thomas Littleton Holt.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Carter Hall were also constant visitors to the St. James's green-room. Mrs. S. C. Hall I never knew intimately; but I was on the friendliest terms with her husband almost down to the time of his death, in 1889, at the great age of 88. When I first knew him, in 1838, he had been sub-editor of the *Britannia*, editor of the *New*

Monthly Magazine, and was just about to establish the *Art Union Journal*, the parent of the existing *Art Journal*. The last time I saw "Sam" Hall was in 1878, at the funeral of dear old George Cruikshank, at which the late Lord Houghton, General McMurdo, S. C. Hall, and the present writer were the pall-bearers; but I frequently corresponded with him in the late evening of his years.

There was produced at the St. James's, in Braham's time, a drama called *The French Refugee*, in which I think my mother played; but I specially remember that the part of the *ingénue* was enacted by a singularly beautiful girl named Alison. She afterwards acquired considerable celebrity as an actress. She married a Captain Seymour; and many years afterwards I met her at dinner at the house of my dear old friend Charles Reade, novelist and dramatist, at Knightsbridge. I attended her funeral at Willesden.

Alfred Wigan I have already mentioned, not as a frequenter of the green-room, but as an actor. Old Mr. John Parry, also, father of John Parry, junior, and who was himself somewhat noted as a writer on Welsh music, was frequently to be seen in the St. James's green-room. So was a Mr. Barham Livius, of whom I remember little beyond his certainly peculiar name, and the fact that he had a head closely resembling that of Samuel Rogers, poet and banker—that is to say, a death's head. There was likewise a Sir Fortunatus Dwarris; and another gentleman of chivalric rank, of whom the rumour ran that he had

been knighted by William IV. in mistake for somebody else.

So much for the St. James's green-room. Of that at the Haymarket, then under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster, I have not, as regards the period in question, much to say. When Braham went to pieces, my mother accepted an engagement for a short time at the Haymarket; but she had no kind of chance of obtaining appreciation for her talents at the "Little Theatre;" inasmuch as Sheridan Knowles's comedy of the *Love Chase* was in the full tide of its splendid success; and the most that my parent could hope for was to be "understudy" to that admirable *comédienne* Mrs. Glover, who played the Widow Green in Sheridan Knowles's play. The cast was a sumptuous one. The elder Farren was Sir William Fondlove, Webster was Wildrake, and Mrs. Nisbett, Constance. The lovers' quarrel between the last-named couple I shall never forget; and the house used to burst into a rapture of applause when Constance, exasperated by Wildrake's panegyrics of an imaginary mistress, exclaims:—

Constance—"She should be—
Wildrake—"—What?"
Constance—"What you got thrice your share of when at school,
And yet not half your due."

My mother's engagement came to an abrupt and sad termination by her falling sick of the small-pox; and months passed before she was quite convalescent. We children were sent away with our nurse,

Mrs. Esner, and my mother's maid Mary Anne, first to a house on Richmond Green; next to one on Clapham Common, and ultimately to board and lodge with a Mrs. Chesterton in Duchess Street, Portland Place. I just mention the names of the faithful servitors to whose custody we were consigned, with the object of briefly drawing attention to the extraordinary change which has taken place in the conditions of domestic service within the last half century. I think Nurse Esner was with us full ten years, and Mary Anne Merriman was the youngest of three sisters—Letitia and Emma were the other two—who had been successively in my mother's service and only left that service to be married to well-to-do tradesmen. The three sisters were the daughters of a respectable butcher and farmer in Leicestershire; they saw no degradation in domestic servitude, and did their work cheerfully, lovingly, and faithfully, for wages which a modern parlour-maid would laugh to scorn. Letitia, the eldest of the three, must have left us about 1835. My mother dying at Brighton in 1860, I brought her remains to London, to lay them by the side of my brother Charles and my sister Augusta at Kensal Green Cemetery; and when the funeral was over, I found, weeping behind a tombstone, our old, old servant Letitia Merriman.

My mother was attended during her sore sickness by Sir James Clark, one of the Queen's physicians; by Mr. Stone, a well-known practitioner of the time—but I do not remember whether he was a physician or a surgeon—and by the two Guthries, father and son, who

had looked after my miserable eyes in my early childhood. The attack of small-pox, unusually violent in its character, had temporarily deprived my mother of her sight; but she gradually recovered her vision, and she has often told me that her first consciousness of approaching convalescence was when old Mr. Guthrie, one morning, caused a looking-glass to be placed on the bed and bade her to look at herself to see how "d——d ugly" she was. He was a most humane, compassionate, and generous surgeon; he never took one penny fee from us; but he was a brusque, short-tempered gentleman, and he swore freely.

When quite restored to health, which was, I think, about the end of May, 1839, my mother, whose finances had been terribly disorganised from her long illness, took a benefit at the Haymarket Theatre. The principal attraction of the evening was Vanbrugh's comedy of *The Provoked Husband*—Lord Townley being played by William Charles Macready; while Lady Townley was acted by Miss Taylor, afterwards Mrs. Walter Lacy. The entertainment concluded with a farce in which the inimitable Irish comedian, Tyrone Power, took part. All these good and true artists gave their services gratuitously; and in the course of the evening some instrumental music was performed which was composed by H.R.H. the Prince Consort. Her Majesty the Queen honoured my parent with her gracious patronage; and she was also supported by four constant and generous patronesses, who had known her and befriended her ever since her days of early

widowhood—the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Norfolk, the Marchioness of Westminster, and the Countess Stanhope.

Let me succinctly recall our general state and prospects in the summer of 1839. My eldest brother Frederick was, as I have already mentioned, in Paris, studying the pianoforte under Kalkbrenner; my second brother, Charles Kerrison, the godson of the gallant General, Sir Edward Kerrison, had been educated at the Blue Coat School, where he rose to be "Great Erasmus" and Deputy Grecian. He was a ripe Latin, Greek, and Hebrew scholar, an admirable penman, a skilled elocutionist; and he had more learning and more humour in his little finger than I ever had in my whole right hand. He would have made a figure in the Church, or at the Bar, or in the Indian Civil Service; but for some reason, inscrutable to me, my mother removed him from Christ's Hospital, just as he was about to be nominated Grecian; and consequently he never proceeded to the University. He proceeded instead to a desk in the offices of the Edinburgh Life Assurance Company, and a year or two later, through the influence of Mr. Somers Cocks, he obtained a Government clerkship in the Tithes Commissioners Office, Somerset Place, Somerset House, the head of his department being Colonel Dickson of the Royal Engineers, a gentleman who, not only then, but for years afterwards, treated him with unvarying kindness. My sister Augusta, who was now fifteen years of age, although, poor little soul! she did not look more than

twelve, was sent, when my mother got well, as a day-boarder to an excellent school in Golden Square, conducted by a Mrs. Johnson. This lady's husband kept a hatter's shop at the corner of Regent Street and Vigo Street; but it was deemed a terrible breach of etiquette among Mrs. Johnson's young lady-pupils to speak of the emporium at the corner of Vigo Street as a shop—they always called it "the warehouse." As for my brother Albert, who was two years my senior, and who was not a very bright boy, he was sent, first to a middle-class school in Bedfordshire, and afterwards to one at Clapham, where he had for a schoolfellow Mr. Francis Ravenscroft, the present manager, I apprehend, of the Birkbeck Bank. I mention this little circumstance for the reason that, in the course of every year I receive large numbers of letters from elderly gentlemen, who claim me as their former schoolfellow; then again, I am not unfrequently reminded by elderly correspondents that I am an "Old Blue," and am asked whether I remember the Public Suppers—at which, by the way, my mother used sometimes to sing—the Easter excursions to the Mansion House, the rigid discipline maintained by Mr. Huggins, the steward, and the goodness of heart of Dr. Rice, the head-master.

CHAPTER X.

EARLY EDUCATION.

Learning Melodies by Ear—Latin and Greek—Minor Accomplishments—Barbarity of English Schools—The Fear of the Rod—*Maladie de Langueur*—A Family Council.

I WAS eleven years old when my mother recovered from her illness, and I had never been to school. Stay—I think that in my very early childhood I was sent for a few weeks to a day-school kept by a widow lady named Scott—a connection, unless I am mistaken, of the well-known artist Scott, of Brighton. My remembrance, however, of this scholastic establishment does not extend beyond a hazy impression, but I spent a good deal of my time in the delicious society of a large paper bag full of those delectable sweetmeats known as brandy-balls; which made me very happy, and, as regards my fingers and my face, exceedingly sticky. But I should say that my very brief sojourn at Mrs. Scott's day-school was just before I went blind, and that it was thought more prudent that I should devote my attention to lollipops than to learning.

I repeat that in the third year of the Queen's reign I was eleven years old; and I can say with the honest consciousness that no human being—not even my bitterest enemy—could ever accuse me of conceit that I was a clever boy. I had not a particle, it is true,

of imagination, and never had. My parent had unwisely refused to allow me to be taught a single note of music; but I had learned by ear nearly every one of the melodies in the Italian, French, and English operas of the period, and nearly all the songs that were then favourites in fashionable society; and at present, although my voice is cracked, and my intonation imperfect, I can hum all the tunes which I heard in childhood and in boyhood. My dear brother Charles, fresh from the Blue Coat School, had well grounded me in Latin and in Greek. I never became a very good Latin scholar, but those who surround me and solace me in my old age have got all my juvenile Greek exercise and copy-books, and could testify, were it necessary, that no night passes now without my doing my Greek "rubber up of memory" in characters a little more crabbed than of yore, but still minute and legible. Eight years ago I came home from India in a P. & O. on board which the late Sir William Gregory, sometime Governor of Ceylon, was also a passenger. I noticed that he used to watch me grinding away at the most fascinating of all languages in the saloon in the evening; and at length he said to me, "That which you do after dinner I do before breakfast. I always have an hour's Homer in the morning." And Sir William Gregory was then sixty-eight years of age. At eleven I could speak French ungrammatically but fluently, and I can say the same as regards Italian. I could draw better than boys of eleven can generally handle the pencil, and I was—to conclude—for my

age, a very well-read boy, especially conversant with history, with biography, and with geography and books of travel.

But I had never been to school, nor even received any lessons from a professional tutor. My only instructors had been my sister Augusta and my brother Charles, who, when 1839 came, had no longer the leisure to teach me. I longed, I yearned, I panted to go to school; to be under the authority and to listen to the counsels of some wise and learned man. I was an affectionate boy; I loved my parent with my heart and soul; but I chafed at a petticoat government, I had an uneasy sensation that I was not understood, that I was often rebuked without cause, and praised when I had not deserved commendation. My mother hesitated to send me to school for a reason which I am half ashamed to give, but which I must needs explain, because I wish in this book to be as candid as ever I can.

The discipline at English schools at this period was perhaps not so utterly barbarous as it was in the days when it used to be said humorously of Dr. Parr "that he kept a private slaughter-house at Alton, as he had kept slaughter-houses before at Stanmore, at Colchester, and at Norwich;" but that discipline was still to a great extent ferocious. I was eager to go to school, but I shuddered at the idea of being beaten. My mother, the kindest, the best, and the most devoted of parents, was still the daughter of a slave-owner, and had inherited not a little of the slave-

owner's approval of the lash. To her other children she was a severe mother; to me, she was generally mild; probably because I was the youngest of her children, and next because in my early years I was a miserable little invalid. I do not remember that between the ages of five and ten I was corporally punished more than five times; but every one of those chastisements burnt into my soul as though I had been torn with red-hot pincers, or seared with a branding-iron. It was the degradation and not the pain of the punishment that I felt. When I was eleven and had become a serious, thinking, logical and kenning boy, much of my life became an Inferno to me. I was not beaten; but I was continually threatened with the scourge, I was continually menaced with being sent to some strict school; and rods and canes and straps were continually, figuratively speaking, brandished before my eyes.

I was always a nervous boy; and at last, through sheer nervous tension, I fell into a lethargic, tottering, and trembling state of ill-health approaching that which the French call a *maladie de langueur*. I ceased to take pleasure in my beloved books and my equally beloved pen-and-ink drawings; and would brood for hours, crouching in a chair, to be rebuked for sulkiness, or threatened with punishment for idleness. I was neither sulky nor wilfully idle. I was only wretched; and my young heart had been taken out of me. Something had to be done. I was ashamed to tell the doctors the cause of my misery; so a *conseil de*

famille was summoned. My aunt Sophy, who kept a school somewhere near Lisson Grove, and who was a disciplinarian, opined that the only way of meeting my case was a liberal application of the stick. My aunt Eliza held that I ought to be sent into the country; and that plenty of new-laid eggs, new milk, and apple-pie would soon restore me to health and strength. But my dear cousin Elise and my dearest cousin Sara, both West Indians, and the daughters of slave-owners, and who probably understood the peculiarities of my case much better than any other of my relations did, pointed out that I loved learning, and that it was absolutely necessary that my studies should be directed by an experienced and capable teacher of my own sex.

Furthermore, they remarked that I was already a tolerable linguist, and that my capacity for learning languages ought to be diligently encouraged and developed. Finally, my cousin Sara said that she knew a Madame Dizi, an English lady who had married an eminent French harpist, and who lived in the Parc Monceaux, Paris. Madame Dizi, she would be bound, would soon find a first-rate school for me in the French capital, and in French schools, she concluded, everybody knew that no corporal punishment whatever was inflicted. An immense load of agony and terror was removed from my mind when these good words were uttered by my cousin Sara; and my mother, after much cogitation, gave her consent to my being sent to school in France so soon as one had

been found by Madame Dizi. Fortunately, we were in funds at the time; by her benefit at the Haymarket, my mother had realised more than £300; and it luckily happening that two of her former pupils got married that season, she was able to make a handsome addition to our modest pecunium by the commission she received from a well-known firm of pianoforte manufacturers for two grand pianofortes, which she purchased to the account of the happy brides.

CHAPTER XI.

SCHOOL DAYS IN PARIS.

French Boys and their Games—Black-hole—*Pions*—A Man of the Name of Baquet—At the Théâtre Comte—Alexandre Dumas *fils*—The Salon Frascati—Lady Granville in a Chair of State—Grisi, Tamburini, Lablache, and Pauline Garcia—Lady Harriet d'Orsay and her Ringlet—French Animosity—Back to England.

We came back to England, to my intense sorrow and disgust, early in 1841. I say sorrow and disgust, because I was getting on very well at school in Paris, and had lively hopes of getting on better. It was a school of hard work; and I should say that, what with composing my daily themes, construing my Latin and Greek lessons, attending the mathematical and drawing classes, and preparing at the boarding-house, in the evening, the morrow's lessons, I studied on the average full eight hours a day.

We had a very large playground at the *Pension* in the Rue de Courcelles; but the cricket-field was wholly unknown to us. In the winter we drove hoops or chased the flying ball; in the summer we played marbles and battledore-and-shuttlecock; and there was also a game tolerably popular with us, called *aux barres*, a kind of prisoner's base. On the whole, I do not think that we played much. It was not then the fashion for French schoolboys to join in any pastimes of the violent sort, such as football, or running, or

leaping. Such a thing as a pugilistic encounter was never heard of among the boys; and the most serious trouble into which I got during my scholastic career in Paris was due to my having thrown, at Christmas-time, a snowball at one of my schoolfellows. The cheery missile hit him on the nose, but otherwise did him no harm; but it seemed that I had outraged the dignity of the youthful Gaul, who lodged a formal complaint against me with the Prefect of Studies for having been guilty of *voies de fait* and the employment of *force majeure;* and I know not how many hundreds of lines of Virgil I had to write out in expiation of that unfortunate snowball escapade.

I have told you that there was no kind of corporal punishment at the French school to which I was fortunate enough to be sent; but if there was no birch, there was certainly a disagreeable amount of black-hole for serious offences; and as the *cachot,* or solitary cell, assigned to offenders, was supposed to be infested by rats—I do not believe that such was really the case—you may imagine that many an English schoolboy would have preferred a sound thrashing to three days in the *cachot* on bread and water. As a solace for the strictness of the discipline maintained, we had plenty of leave, and enjoyed almost as much freedom as the London Blue Coat boys in roaming about the streets of Paris; and we often went to the opera or to the play—amusements that were forbidden to the Blue Coat boys of half a century ago.

One visit to the theatre made by the inmates of the Pension Hénon in a body, numbering, I should say, about eighty, to a certain tiny theatre in the Passage Choiseul, I shall not readily forget. In this miniature *salle* a whole block of seats in the pit had been secured for us; and one summer afternoon, immediately after dinner—say six p.m.—we were marched down to the Passage Choiseul, escorted by the Prefect of Studies and by three *pions*, or under-ushers—forlorn, dejected creatures, who had nothing to do with teaching the boys, but whose duties were to secure silence during the evening hours of study; to watch them during prayers; to report all cases of misconduct to the proprietors of the *pension*, and generally to act as spies and delaters. These *pions* were hated, despised, and snubbed by the school generally; and by the bigger pupils they were often openly bullied and defied. To my mind they merited much more encouragement than hostility—much more compassion than contumely. It was not their fault that they had got themselves into that galley. The *pion* of the period—I hope his lot has been improved in modern times—was usually a social failure, an innocent "duffer."

One specially mournful type of the class I vividly recollect. He was a large, long, shambling being, with a scrubby red head, and a pasty visage plentifully adorned with freckles. He had bleared eyes, two left legs—so to speak—and large bony hands with the finger-nails always in half mourning. He had been

academically educated at the Collége Louis le Grand, I think, but had failed in each and every career which he had essayed. Junior clerk to a notary; actor, *écrivain publique;* assistant to a quack doctor, *employé* in the *Pompes Funèbres;* bookkeeper in a *bureau de nourrices* —he had been everything by turns, and nothing long, till he subsided into the lowly state of a *pion* in a scholastic *pension.* "*Est que c'est ma faute si je suis une ganache?*" he would sometimes plaintively ask. His name, if I remember right, was Baquet. What are you to do with a man of the name of Baquet?

The performances at the Théâtre Comte, which in 1839 was the name of the Lilliputian play-house in the Passage Choiseul, began early: in fact, it was a theatre for children. Comte was a notable conjurer of the First Napoleonic era, who had taken the small house called "Le Théâtre des Jeunes Élèves," and renamed it after himself. Of the pieces played on the night of our visit I can only remember that one was about Frederick the Great and a youthful page who had a mother; and that the generosity of the illustrious monarch to his youthful servitor made us all weep plentifully.

But it is the audience and not the performance that dwells in my mind. Among my schoolfellows in the pit were the two young sons of Casimir Delavigne, poet and dramatist; a son of Dumanoir, a prolific vaudevillist; and a son of Jaime, another versatile *dramaturge* of the period. But there was another, son of a noted dramatic author, and one destined to achieve the brightest fame both as a novelist and a writer for the stage. This was

a shapely young fellow, who in 1839 must have been about sixteen. He had very light blue-grey eyes and an abundance of soft, light, auburn hair, which curled in rather a frizzled mass. The name of this youth was Alexandre Dumas; and he was the son of the renowned author of "*Les Trois Mousquetaires*," and of "*Le Comte de Monte Cristo*." Among the articles, the use of which was for some absurd reason or another forbidden to us *pensionnaires*, was an opera-glass; and young Alexandre Dumas, who was at the back of the pit, and who was, I believe, naturally short-sighted, coolly produced such a forbidden object, and began to scan Frederick the Great and his page behind the foot-lights. The mutinous act was at once perceived and resented by the Prefect of Studies. "*A bas le lorgnon, Monsieur Dumas! à bas le lorgnon!*" he exclaimed in wrathful tones. Unprophetical prefect! Little could the pedant, unendowed with foresight, know that the lad who had violated the school regulations by using a *lorgnon* was destined to be the author of *Le Demi-Monde* and *La Dame aux Camélias*.

My mother had gone to London during the summer season of 1840 to give a round of singing lessons among her old *clientèle;* and, returning to Paris in the late autumn, she gave a grand concert at the Salon Frascati, which only two years previously had been finally disestablished as a public gaming-house by the Paris Municipality. Frascati was at the angle of the Boulevard and the Rue de Richelieu. The edifice was, I think, pulled down in 1841, and all kinds of

constructions, dedicated to all kinds of purposes, had been installed on the site of the famous pavilions and gardens; but the grand saloon in which my mother held her concert had been the identical apartment in which the enterprising speculator M. Bénazet—afterwards of the Kursaal, Baden-Baden—had carried on, with such immense profit to himself, the pleasing game of *trente-et-quarante;* while the apartment which my mother converted into a refreshment-room had been the one devoted to roulette; and yet another smaller *salon*, which for the nonce she utilised as a withdrawing-room for the *artistes*, had been in the time of Boursault, the predecessor of Bénazet, a select little *inferno*, in which the game exclusively played was *creps*, or crabs—a game of dice—at present, I should say, altogether obsolete. The concert was under the immediate patronage of the then British Ambassadress, Lady Granville, who came to the Salon Frascati with his Excellency and the whole staff of the Embassy, the latter including, if I mistake not, a principal secretary by the name of Henry Lytton Bulwer, the brother of the illustrious novelist, the first Earl of Lytton, and who himself was afterwards to be Lord Dalling.

For the accommodation of the Ambassadress—how manners change! and how we change with them!—my mother caused to be erected in the saloon—where once the monotonous voice of the *donneur de cartes* had been heard hundreds of times a day: "*Rouge perd et couleur*," or "*Rouge gagne, couleur perd*"—a kind

of throne on a *haut-pas*, upholstered in crimson and gold and surmounted by the Royal Arms of England. So her Excellency sat in her chair of state; and in the intervals of the songs and the concerted pieces the *beau monde* and the members of the *corps diplomatique* came to pay their court to the consort of the exceptionally popular representative of Queen Victoria.

A large number of distinguished vocal and instrumental artists performed at this, to us, memorable musical festival. Giulietta Grisi, then in the noon-tide of her beauty and her genius, sang; so did Tamburini, the great baritone; so did Lablache, the renowned basso. Malibran—the divine Malibran—was dead; but among our *cantatrici* was her sister, Pauline Garcia, a singer of astonishing compass of voice, who early retired from the exercise of her profession to become the wife of Monsieur Louis Viardot, the erudite art-collector and critic. My mother realised a large sum of money by this concert; although it was with no very agreeable feelings that she received on the morrow of the function a summons from the Bureau d'Assistance Publique to disburse a sum amounting to several hundreds of francs: being a percentage on her receipts as the *droits des pauvres*, or portion of the poor. I wonder what our London theatrical managers and concert organisers would think if they were called upon to pay such a percentage on their nightly takings? To be sure, there are no regular poor-rates payable by all householders, in France.

In the winter of 1840 my mother went a great deal into society in Paris; and from time to time I obtained an *exeat*, or "pass," from my *pension*, and was taken out to *soirées* and receptions in the great world. In particular do I remember many happy evenings passed at the apartments, in the Rue Tronchet, close to the Church of the Madeleine, of Lady Harriet D'Orsay. She was a most beautiful lady, who had been Miss Harriet Gardiner, a daughter of the Earl of Blessington, but not by the literary Countess. She espoused *en premières noces* that king of dandies, Alfred, Count D'Orsay, the son of *le beau* D'Orsay, and one of Napoleon's favourite generals; but the domestic virtues were not in Count Alfred's line; and I believe that the couple separated for good after a few weeks of matrimonial bliss—if any bliss there were in the business. Lady Harriet, some years afterwards, married Mr. Spencer Cowper, and was justly esteemed for her piety and philanthropy by the English colony in Paris.

I remember her as a charming lady, with lustrous eyes, who dressed her hair in what I have always held to be the most bewitching fashion—a bunch of ringlets on each side of the head, such as you see in the portraits of Henrietta Maria, and in those of some of the beauties of the Court of Charles II. Lady Harriet D'Orsay was really the heroine of a story which has been told in at least twenty forms of twenty different ladies of fashion. She was presiding at a stall at a *vente de charité*, or bazaar, held in aid of the funds of some asylum or another,

when there came up the young Duke of Orleans, son and heir of King Louis Philippe. The Duke, after some polite small talk, began to extol the beauty of her hair; and, indeed, her Henrietta Maria *coiffure* had never looked glossier and softer than it did this day. "Oh!" said His Royal Highness, "if I could only possess one of those enchanting ringlets!" "How much would Monseigneur give for one?" asked Lady Harriet, gravely, "Five thousand francs?" "Five thousand francs!" repeated the Duke; "A mere *bagatelle!*" "Six thousand francs?" "Anything so charming a lady chose to ask." "I will not be extortionate," pursued Lady Harriet; "We will say five thousand." And then she very composedly produced a dainty little pair of scissors; snipped off the adorable Henrietta Maria ringlet; wrapped it in silver paper, and handed it, with a smile and a curtsey full of graceful dignity, to the Duke. His Royal Highness looked very straight down his nose; and returning Lady Harriet's salute, stalked, somewhat gloomily, away. But his Privy Purse duly forwarded the money next day. I can imagine that the agonies of the frugal, not to say parsimonious, King Louis Philippe, when he heard of this prodigality on the part of the heir to the Crown, must have been shocking to contemplate.

Now you will understand how sorry I was to be suddenly torn from my beloved Paris, from the studies in which I delighted, and the society which, to my young mind, seemed so beautiful, so refined, and so intellectual. We were driven out of France mainly

through rumours of war between France and England, and the alarmist representations of our friend Tamburini. There was, indeed, not only the usual display of rancour against England in the columns of the French press—rancour accentuated by the British operations in Syria and the capture of St. Jean d'Acre by Sir Charles Napier; but popular feeling among the masses, of a nature hostile to this country, was almost universally rife. I had a hard time of it at college and at my boarding-house; normally, I used to be worried and heckled in consequence of the base conduct of Marshal Blücher and the Prussians in coming up instead of General Grouchy and the French at the battle of Waterloo. But towards the end of 1840 these inimical sentiments became further embittered by all kinds of absurd calumnies touching our proceedings in the East—how we had unjustly arrested French subjects and fired upon French hospitals and lazarettos. An additional grievance against England was the madcap expedition of Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte to Boulogne. At the time of this crazy escapade the French were positively deifying the memory of Napoleon the Great, whose remains were being brought from St. Helena to France for interment in the Invalides, and whose second funeral I witnessed.

Yet, for all this, the French were savagely angry that the Bonapartist plot should have been hatched in London; and this anger was aggravated to the point of exasperation by the circumstance that the Prince and his more or less disreputable followers

had landed in France from a British steamer, specially chartered for the voyage, and called *The Edinburgh Castle.* Night after night disorderly crowds assembled in front of the British Embassy in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, yelling for "*le sang de Milord Granville,*" and even "*le sang de Patten*"—the only fault of poor Mr. Patten being that he was one of the medical attendants of the Embassy, and that his residence was just opposite Lord Granville's hotel. My mother lived hard by, in the Rue de la Pépinière, and she became so terrified with the nightly disturbances in the Faubourg, and the representations of Tamburini —who declared that war was imminent, and that he had sold all his money out of the French *rentes*—that she hastily removed my sister from the convent where her education was being completed; took me away from my college in the Rue St. Lazare, and from my *pension* in the Rue de Courcelles, and so packed up and departed, bag and baggage—my eldest brother being one of the party—to Boulogne, and so to Dover.

CHAPTER XII.

PROVINCIAL THEATRICALS.

The Theatre Royal, Dover—Henry Wallack and his Slip of the Tongue—James Wallack and his Sons—An Early Novel—Producing *The Yellow Rose*—W. R. Copeland and his Honest Check-takers—Charles Sala as Hamlet—Shakespeare as the Ghost—A Military Funeral.

THERE was no Lord Warden Hotel at Dover in those days; and the railway to London, although considerable progress had been made in the work, was, in 1841, very far from completion. It was, I think, at a cosy old-fashioned hostelry by the side of "The Gun," kept by an old-fashioned worthy named Hipgrave, that we first took up our quarters: subsequently removing to furnished apartments in Snargate Street, opposite the Heights, the little summer-houses on the gentle slopes of which used to fill me with huge delight. I do not think that my mother's finances were at the time in a very prosperous condition. School and boarding and lodging bills had swallowed up the bulk of the profits of the grand concert at the Salon Frascati; my eldest brother was a rather expensive young man; and in so desperate a hurry had we been to leave the fair land of France that we had dispensed with the *diligence* and travelled post in a *berline de voyage*—a mode of locomotion which cost a good deal of money. Be it as it may, my mother found it necessary to do

something to keep the domestic *pot-au-feu* simmering. My dear, indefatigable parent had not altogether run out of funds; so she thought that she might utilise a portion of her small remaining *peculium* by helping to "run" the Theatre Royal, Dover, an exiguous play-house, the fortunes of which, like those of many other provincial theatres of the period, had been for a considerable time in a simply deplorable condition.

One of the recent lessees had been Mr. Henry Wallack, a respectable melodramatic actor, who is best remembered, perhaps, in theatrical annals through the curious slip which he once inadvertently made in his grammar, while playing the part of Grindoff in the melodrama—formerly so dear to the juvenile proprietors of toy theatres—of *The Miller and his Men.* In an early scene of the play, Grindoff has to ask one of the banditti, disguised as millers, the question, "Are those sacks disposed of?" But, confusing his words in an almost incomprehensible manner—for he was a well-educated man—he said, "*Is* them sacks disposed of?" To which the brigand-miller promptly —too promptly, as it turned out in the long run—replied, "Yes, they *am.*" He laughs best who laughs last. The brigand had his joke; but Harry Wallack was stage-manager, and very speedily the maladroit wag got the "sack." The gentleman who played Grindoff was a brother of that superb actor James Wallack, who, after a long and brilliant career in England, took up his abode in the United States, where, at New York, he founded "Wallack's Theatre," in the

management of which he was succeeded by his accomplished son, the late Lester Wallack. All the young Wallacks, sons of James, were friends of my brother Charles and myself. More than one of them, I think, held commissions in the army; and one was for some time Governor of Millbank Prison. They were fine, dashing, chivalric young fellows, as handsome as their handsome sire. The last time that I saw James Wallack, then grown very old and feeble, was at the house of his son Lester, at New York, in 1864; and the latter told me that when his father went to the States he had accidentally taken with him the manuscript of a novel which I had written at the mature age of thirteen, and which bore the attractive, although not very refined, title of "Jemmy Jenkins; or, the Adventures of a Sweep." I would give something to have a glance at that manuscript now; since the thing must have been written at Dover just after our return from France, and it must have been full of the most appalling Gallicisms.

Mr. H. Wallack could do nothing at all with the Theatre Royal, Dover; and to him succeeded a Miss Caroline Darling—a tall and attenuated young lady, who was supposed to excel in "pantaloon parts." I scarcely think that her surname was really Darling; but the name was then one to conjure with, owing to the popular enthusiasm excited by the heroism of Grace Darling, the dauntless daughter of the Northern lighthouse-keeper. Poor Miss Caroline Darling! Saturday after Saturday would "the ghost" decline to

"walk" in her treasury; but she was valiant, although impecunious; and on Saturday afternoons would sit on a rickety chair, in the middle of the stage, with an open and empty reticule on her lap, sobbing, "Tear me piecemeal; take my gown, my shawl, my boots; but stick to me for another week." The company—there were "stock" companies in the provinces in those days—were loyal to their luckless manageress. The low comedian used to make a little money by singing comic ditties at a public-house "free-and-easy" after the performance was over; the heavy tragedian gave lessons in elocution at a neighbouring boarding-school for young ladies; I suspect that the leading lady did a little remunerative business on her own account in bonnet-building and dress-making; and the "walking gentleman," I have reason to know, did under the circumstances extremely well; for he lodged at a butcher's in Snargate Street, and made love to the butcher's daughter.

My mother came so far as she was able to the assistance of the embarrassed manageress; and the business beginning slightly to improve through the arrival of a new regiment in the garrison, we brought out a new comedy, called *The Yellow Rose*. It was a translation from a French piece, *La Rose Jaune;* in preparing the English version I think that my mother, my brother Frederick, my sister, and myself all had a share. I know that I made a fair copy of the piece, and wrote out all the parts, "cues" and all. *The Yellow Rose* was not, dramatically speaking, a

success; although the officers of the new regiment mustered in force in the dress-circle. The stage manager, indeed, had the courage to come before the curtain at the conclusion of the play, and to announce that it would be repeated until further notice; whereupon one of the nine occupants of the gallery called out in a resonant, but scarcely friendly, voice, "Not by no means." Exit *The Yellow Rose*. So far as my memory serves me, Miss Caroline Darling faded away shortly afterwards into the Infinities.

She was succeeded by a Mr. W. R. Copeland, a really capable actor of established reputation, who, some years afterwards, became lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, and realised, I have been told, a handsome competence. To him is attributed the saying that he was the only manager in England who had thoroughly honest check-takers and money-takers; "and yet," Mr. Copeland was accustomed, reflectively to add, "they all buy freehold houses out of salaries of fifteen shillings a week." In 1841, Mr. Copeland was verging upon middle-age and inclined to be stout; his wife, who was slender, was a charming lady: had perhaps a slightly too strong *penchant* for playing Ophelia and Juliet, when perhaps parts of a more matronly type would have suited her better. One of Mr. Copeland's earliest ventures was *Hamlet*, and he unexpectedly found a promising young *débutant* for the character of the Prince of Denmark in my second brother, Charles Kerrison, who, being full of animal spirits, had engaged in a lively race with the

constable in London, and had managed to outrun that functionary.

Harried by usurers at Somerset House, just as Anthony Trollope tells us in his "Autobiography" that he was harried, my brother Charles had not been strong enough to battle with the sixty-percenters, and had resigned his post in the Civil Service, which, I believe, he had always cordially disliked. At all events he became, before he was twenty-one, a gentleman at large, with a strong leaning towards adopting the stage as a profession. He had played many parts in amateur theatricals at a semi-private theatre in Catherine Street, Strand. Of course, when he joined us at Dover, he was anxious to enact Hamlet the Dane. Juvenile tragedians have displayed such an anxiety ever since the days of David Garrick; so at least we infer from the memoirs of that mighty actor. My brother Charles was really a splendid reciter of blank verse; and in one respect he resembled the original impersonator of the Royal Dane, for he was "fat and scant of breath." Mr. Copeland, however, saw much promise in him, and *Hamlet* was speedily put in rehearsal; Mrs. Copeland being inevitably the Ophelia, and my mother playing the Queen; while the middle-aged manager contented himself with the part of the Ghost. There is a dramatic legend that the original Ghost was Shakespeare himself; and I remember that honest John Hollingshead once expressed his entire belief in this legend; and cited it as a typical illustration of the business astuteness of the poet, who was manager

as well as actor. "You see," observed Mr. Hollingshead, "there is a very long wait between the appearance of the Ghost on the platform of the Castle Elsinore and his turning up again in the closet scene. Now, what did Shakespeare do, but throw a cloak over his armour, and take a quiet stroll downstairs to make sure that he was not being robbed by his *employés* in the front of the house."

There was a difficulty with respect to the martial panoply of the deceased Majesty of Denmark at the Theatre Royal, Dover. Mr. Copeland had no armour of his own, and the wardrobe was in an almost wholly denuded state; but my eldest brother, who was a capable modeller and draughtsman, came to the rescue and very soon fitted the Ghost with a full suit of armour made from stout pasteboard, neatly covered with tinfoil. It served very well on the first night of performance; only through the breaking of the strings of the Ghost's helmet he experienced considerable difficulty in keeping his beaver up.

The Copeland management did not last long; and the company, with their manager, went away in a body, and in a hurry, to try their luck at various towns along the south coast. My mother was not discouraged; she gave a masquerade at the theatre, and this was succeeded by a grand ball at a place called, I believe, the Apollonian Rooms. This last function was attended by nearly all the officers of the garrison in full uniform. The county families came in from Folkestone and Hythe and Sandgate; and Snargate Street on the night of the ball

was blocked with travelling carriages and postchaises; and my mother made such a comfortable sum of money that she felt herself equipped for the London season, and made preparations for the migration of herself and family to town.

I have only one other memory of Dover. I had seen in Paris the grandiose interment of Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarento, and the infinitely more interesting Second Funeral of Napoleon the Great; but it was from our drawing-room window in Snargate Street that I beheld, for the first time, an English military funeral. It was that of an assistant surgeon in the 54th Foot, who had been killed, inadvertently it turned out, by some rough in a brawl at a fair, and the remains of the poor gentleman were laid to earth with due martial honours. Very many have been the famous funerals of which I have been a spectator since 1841: the Duchess of Kent, the Prince Consort, the blind King of Hanover, Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, Lord Palmerston, Lord Macaulay, Robert Stephenson, Sir Edwin Landseer, the Tsar Alexander II. of Russia, the Emperor Napoleon III., the poor Prince Imperial, the Duke of Clarence—all these and many other notable personages have I seen interred; yet does there dwell abidingly in my memory the image of that quiet funeral *cortége* in Snargate Street, Dover—the dead man's cocked hat and sword lying on the Union Jack which was the pall of his coffin; the instruments and muffled drums of the band playing the "Dead March in *Saul*;" the firing party with arms reversed.

CHAPTER XIII.

BACK IN LONDON.

Herne Bay in 1841—In the Quadrant again—The Dawn of the Envelope—Balfe and His Wife—The Duchess "Vicky"—The Princess's Theatre under John Medex Maddox—Thackeray's "Mr. Polonius"—The Charterhouse and some of its Inmates—Madame Feron—Duke Charles of Brunswick—H. P. Grattan—Weiss's "Shape"—A Cloak with a Scarlet Lining—Family Details—Running Intellectually to Seed.

It was with summary diligence that Cæsar came into Gaul. As diligently did we proceed from the town of Cæsar's citadel to the shores of the Thames, only, as my mother's cash-box was not altogether equivalent to the military chest of the Tenth Legion, we were fain to be very frugal in our journey to the metropolis. We travelled from Dover to Canterbury by stage-coach, all our heavy baggage being sent on to London by the humble but in those days indispensable necessary waggon. Then, my mother and my eldest brother proceeded to Herne Bay in a postchaise; and we children followed in an anomalous vehicle drawn by two horses which was half a coach and half a fly; the driver of the vehicle seeming himself somewhat diffident in defining its character. He spoke of it as "conveyance." Of Herne Bay I remember nothing save a prodigiously protracted pier, very soon to be immortalised in the pages of the not yet nascent *Punch*. Strangely enough, I have never set foot in the favourite watering-place since the spring of 1841.

At Herne Bay we took steamer for London. It was not the first time that I had seen the great forests of shipping in the Pool; since it was by the Thames that we had travelled to Boulogne on our way to Paris in 1839; but it was on the return journey that my eldest brother pointed out to me two objects which, I know not why, obstinately refuse to be erased from my memory. One was a long, low-built steamer; and when I innocently asked where her paddle-boxes might be, I was told that the vessel was propelled by an Archimedean screw; the other was a sailing vessel, a three-master with a hull, not black, but muddy drab, and close to her bows were painted in red, and in very large characters, a broad arrow and the figure "14." The three-master, my brother told me, was a convict ship; had she any name, I wonder, besides "14"? She had a sailing skipper, my brother continued, but no captain commandant; the superintendent of the convicts being a surgeon in the Royal Navy.

After a few days spent in a very good hostelry, the "Golden Cross," Charing Cross, and a week in a boarding-house in Panton Square, Haymarket, where our nights were chiefly devoted to the active pursuit of insecticide, we settled down in our old happy hunting ground in the Quadrant; our apartments being this time at the house of a stationer named Drewett. There I made acquaintance with a most ingenious machine for cutting envelopes, which now universally used accessories to correspondence were, until the penny postage system became

firmly established, very rarely made use of. In the days before envelopes, people who had very short epistles to write, and who did not care about devoting a whole sheet of paper to the purpose, used to double up half a sheet, scribble their communications thereupon, and fold up the missive in a triangular form: the base being considerably longer than the sides. These triangular letters which, if dexterously folded, could be securely sealed or wafered, were known as "cocked-hat notes;" but they were rarely posted. With the introduction of adhesive postage-stamps and cheap postage itself, came another great revolution in the national correspondence. Peers and Members of Parliament were no longer importuned for "franks"—being their autographs covering the cost of postage; and the "frank-hunter" practically disappeared, to be resuscitated, however, in another incarnation as the present and equally objectionable Autograph Fiend.

In the course of 1842 we saw a great deal of the delightful Irish composer Michael William Balfe and his wife and family, who occupied the upper part of a house in Conduit Street. Balfe was oscillating at the time between London and Paris, in which last-named city, in 1843, he produced his opera *Le Puits d'Amour;* the libretto being written by MM. Scribe and Saint Georges. Madame Lina Balfe, the composer's wife, was a stately lady of Hungarian extraction, and had been originally a professional *cantatrice;* she had, however, long left the operatic stage; and, apart from the loving care which she bestowed on

her young children, her principal occupation in life seemed to be that of being jealous of Balfe, who, I am afraid, gave her plenty of cause for listening to the promptings of the green-eyed monster. It must have been towards the end of 1841 that I heard Balfe sing in his own opera of *Keolanthe* at the English Opera House—at present the Lyceum—of which he was then the lessee. The speculation was a disastrous one; and Balfe lost all the money he had made, and got heavily into debt, besides. He had, when I first knew him, three children: Louisa, who afterwards married a German gentleman named Behrend; Victoria, who had a very sweet voice, but one, perhaps, not quite strong enough for the lyric stage, and who married first Sir John Crampton, H.B.M.'s Minister at St. Petersburg—he had previously been Minister at Washington, and I knew him afterwards as Minister at Madrid—and, secondly, the Duke of Frias, a grandee of Spain, of the very bluest blood, whose father had been Ambassador Extraordinary to England at the Coronation of Queen Victoria. When I went to Madrid in 1865 and renewed my acquaintance with "Vicky," now become a duchess, I was taken over the stables at the Duke's palatial residence, and there I was shown the *coche de gala*, the splendidly decorated state carriage in which the Ambassador Extraordinary had ridden to Westminster Abbey.

Louisa and Victoria Balfe were the playmates of my sister and myself. There was also in 1842-3 a little mite of a son, known in the nursery as "Boy,"

but who, according to his baptismal certificate, was Michael William Balfe. He obtained in early manhood a commission in the Indian Army, but to judge from certain distressing circumstances recently made public, Fortune consistently refused to smile on Mr. Michael William Balfe, who appears to have been in many respects a counterpart of the fabled "Murad the Unlucky."

Although my mother had retained much of her aristocratic connection as a teacher of singing, the poor gentlewoman naturally could not help her pupils getting married; and somehow or another, the coming race of young ladies of fashion preferred, as a rule, foreign singing-masters to English singing-mistresses. Consequently, her health being now completely restored, she thought that she would go back to that stage which she had loved so well; and she found a pleasant opportunity for the exercise both of her dramatic and her lyrical talents in the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street, under the lesseeship and management of Mr. John Medex Maddox. Mr. Maddox was a Jew of most Judaical aspect and intonation, whose real name was Medex: the "Maddox" being an ornamental suffix, added for purposes best known to himself. His brother, Mr. Samuel Medex, familiarly termed "Sam," kept a cigar shop in Oxford Street, directly opposite the Princess's Theatre; and this warehouse, during the Maddox management, became almost as well-known a resort for singers and actors as Kilpack's "Divan" in King Street, Covent Garden, was for actors and

journalists. The original Princess's Theatre, which has been in modern times almost entirely reconstructed, was built from the designs of the late Marsh Nelson, the architect of the Junior United Service Club and of Lord Rothschild's house in Piccadilly, and whom it was my lot many years afterwards to know as a member of the Reform Club. He built the Princess's for the famous Hamlet—Thackeray's "Mr. Polonius"—the silversmith of Cranbourne Alley, who amassed an immense fortune, but muddled it away in disastrous speculations: among which was a large investment in Royal Bonds which were never paid, and who died at last a brother of the Charter House.

That venerable foundation, half almshouse, half school, has been a haven of rest to many notable personages whom I remember well. There died Moncrieff, the author of innumerable dramatic pieces, and the adapter to the stage of Pierce Egan's *Life in London;* there, too, ended his days in peace Madison Morton, the author, or rather the adapter from the French, of the screaming farce *Box and Cox.* In the Charter House likewise found refuge Monk Mason, sometime lessee of the Italian Opera House, and who ascended with Mr. Green in the Nassau Balloon on her famous voyage to the Continent. John Sheehan, "the Irish Whisky-Drinker" of the *Temple Bar Magazine,* became also in his declining years a brother of the Charter House; and finally among the Carthusians within my ken was Dr. Gustave Ludwig Moritz Strauss, an intimate early associate of mine and the author of

a diverting autobiography in which fiction is liberally mingled with fact, which he published under the pseudonym of "The Old Bohemian." The doctor's stay in the Charter House was not, I believe, a very prolonged one. I think that after a time he grew weary of "Chapel" twice a day, and dinner in Hall, and the long black cloak; and I have been told that he "commuted and cut."

The Princess's, which cost nearly £50,000 and achieved the ruin of Hamlet, had been turned to many uses before it was taken by Maddox. A series of Promenade Concerts was given there under the direction of a well-known musician named Eliason while we were in France; the concerts were not remunerative, and when we came back the landlord seemed to have so entirely abandoned the hope of letting the premises, that permission had been given to an elderly female, who dealt in kettle-holders, dog-collars, corkscrews, scissors, and penknives, and such small wares, to stretch her stall right across the principal door of entrance in Oxford Street.

How Maddox scraped together sufficient money to open the Princess's was a mystery. He had led a roving kind of life as stage-manager, acting-manager, and agent-in-advance; and in the last-named capacity had travelled with an English singer who, at one time, enjoyed considerable celebrity. This lady was known as Madame Feron — who had been formerly *prima donna assoluta* at La Scala at Milan. I read of her as giving her services at the farewell

benefit of Joseph Grimaldi, the peerless clown; and, again, I note a kindly allusion to her talent as Mrs. Feron Glossop in the recently published "Correspondence of Mr. Jekyll." She married, indeed, early in life a Mr. Glossop, the lessee of the disestablished Victoria Theatre, at the corner of the New Cut and the Waterloo Road. Madame Feron was the grandmother of Sir Augustus Harris.

I have an idea that Duke Charles of Brunswick, a sufficiently notorious character in London at this period, lent Maddox enough cash to tide over the first few months of his management. The Duke, who had been burnt out of his capital and his duchy to boot, by his insurgent subjects, shortly after the French Revolution of 1830, was a very tall, heavily whiskered and moustachioed personage of haughty bearing and decidedly unprepossessing mien. He dyed his hair and he rouged. I used often to see him stalking about, attended by a German equerry, behind the scenes of the Princess's; and about 1847, although I did not come in immediate personal contact with him, I executed for him an artistic commission to which I shall have hereafter occasion to refer, and which was of a somewhat remarkable nature. Whoever it was that furnished Maddox with the necessary funds, he duly opened the theatre with the opera of *La Sonnambula* and a burlesque on some Oriental topic in which the heroine—or, rather, hero—in a velvet tunic and tights, was a plump little lady with a melodious contralto voice who was the wife of Mr. H. P. Grattan, popularly known

as "Harry," an actor, dramatist, journalist, and comic writer, who was one of the earliest members of the *Punch* staff, and, according to his own showing, wrote a considerable portion of the first number of *Punch's Almanack* in the cool seclusion of the Fleet Prison. The majority of men of letters in those days were from time to time involuntary boarders and lodgers in the Fleet or in the Queen's Bench. Whitecross Street they eschewed as low. The burlesque was prefaced by Bellini's ever-delightful opera, in which my mother was to have played the part of Lisa, but at the last moment Madame Feron asserted her supremacy as an ex-*prima-donna assoluta;* and she, instead of my mother, impersonated the part in question. Who the Amina and who the Elvino were I fail to remember; but Count Rodolfo was played by Weiss, who was afterwards the intimate friend of my brother and myself. He was a very handsome man; but in his early manhood so exceedingly thin that he was compelled to wear what in theatrical parlance is known as a "shape"—a complete suit of padding from neck to ankles, worn next to the skin. One night he was playing in an opera in which he wore flowing robes; and was consequently able to dispense with his suit of padding. An inquisitive little ballet-girl thought that she would like to have a peep into Mr. Weiss's dressing-room; and Joe, the call-boy, ascending the stairs, heard an appalling shriek, and saw the inquisitive *coryphée* rush from the room, throwing up her arms in a spasm of terror. She

had seen Weiss's "shape" hanging up behind the door, and thought that the *basso* had hanged himself.

For about a year it was my privilege—as it was, *longo intervallo*, that of Duke Charles of Brunswick—to saunter almost every night behind the scenes of the Princess's Theatre. I must have been an odd-looking boy; for I remember that I wore a blue-cloth cap with a peak and a long silk tassel, and a cloak. I hated that cloak; although it was a handsome garment of very fine broadcloth, with a velvet collar and a brass *agrafe*. It was lined with scarlet; and that lining I was always agonisingly anxious to keep from public view. The abhorred mantle had, in fact, been presented to my mother by an officer who had served in the British Legion in Spain, and the cloak had been cut down to suit my stature; but my parent had inflexibly refused to have the scarlet lining replaced by one of soberer hue. She said that it ought to make me feel martial. It made me, on the contrary, feel mean.

The chief feature of the management of Mr. Maddox was the production of English versions of Italian operas: thus he produced adaptations of *Anna Bolena*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Othello*, *I Puritani*, and *Lucrezia Borgia*. In the last-named, Maffio Orsini was played by Mrs. H. P. Grattan; the *prima donna* was Madame Evelina Garcia, and, later on, the fascinating Anna Thillon, who created quite a *furore* in the opera of the *Crown Diamonds*. The tenors were those competent

English singers — Templeton and Allen. Maddox prospered, and gradually enlarged his sphere of operations. Albert Smith, Charles Dance, and Charles Lamb Kenney wrote either singly, or in collaboration, the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide extravaganzas; but the astute manager shrank from the risk and the expense attendant on the production of a Christmas pantomime. He was not averse, however, from paying good salaries to first-rate English comedians—in particular, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley drew crowds to the theatre, as did also that drollest of low comedians, Wright, afterwards to be so closely and brilliantly associated with the fortunes of the Adelphi. Middle-aged playgoers, who remember with delight Charles Mathews in *Used Up*, will smile, perhaps incredulously, when I tell them that the first English translation of the French vaudeville, *L'Homme blasé*, was brought out at the Princess's in 1842-3 :—the precursor of Sir Charles Coldstream being played by Wright, who, I remember, on the first night, borrowed a pair of trousers of the Royal Stuart tartan pattern, from the still living Walter Lacy: those rubicund pantaloons being considered to be just the kind of garment that would be worn by a gentleman of fashion. Among the operatic memories of this, my first stage of experience at the Princess's, I may mention that a brief engagement was fulfilled by Mr. and Mrs. Wood. The gentleman was a *tenore robusto;* the lady, as Miss Paton, had been a famous soprano, and had married Lord William Pitt Lennox, from whom she was divorced.

All this time, the—to me very important—question to what kind of English school I was to be sent, was being at intervals debated. To some school it was absolutely necessary that I should be despatched, for I was running, intellectually, to seed. My sister had left Mrs. Johnson's, and was completing her training as a governess, with two wonderful old maids, who lived in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, and who seemed to know everything under the sun—music, languages, drawing, painting, embroidery, arithmetic, history, and the *belles lettres*. They only took private pupils; and their classes never exceeded six in number. I suppose they took them "hot and hot," one come up, the other go down. In these days I apprehend they would be called "crammers;" but their cramming was certainly of the most judicious and skilful nature. They lived in good style, and kept their carriage. I wonder whether there are any such lady-crammers nowadays, or whether they have been snuffed out by ladies' colleges, girls' high-schools, and local university examinations?

At all events, my sister had no longer any time to attend to me. At the expiration of her three months' cramming—or, suppose we call it polishing, or finishing, or, as the dentists say, "fine-fitting"—she obtained a post as governess in the family of a Mr. Hope, a Member of Parliament, who was Under Secretary of State for the Home Department. She used often to take her young pupils to play in the enclosed garden of Hamilton

Place, Park Lane; and among the aristocratic young ladies who occasionally visited the verdant pleasaunce, now disfigured by the atrocious Byron Memorial—I was a member of the committee of that lamentable *fiasco*—was the young Princess Mary of Cambridge, now Duchess of Teck.

For my eldest brother, my mother had purchased the goodwill of the practice of a teacher of the pianoforte, at High Wycombe, Bucks. My brother Charles had obtained an engagement at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, under the management of Mr. Calcraft; and my brother Albert had gone to sea. His first experience of nautical life was scarcely a reassuring one. He went out in a troop-ship belonging to the well-known shipowner, Mr. Soames, the inventor of the marine glue. The vessel was called the *Abercromby Robinson*, and was bound for India; but she was wrecked in Algoa Bay, fortunately without any serious loss of life taking place.

It will thus be seen that, at the age of nearly fourteen, I was left almost entirely to my own devices. At night I was generally behind the scenes, watching the performances from the "wings," and waiting to take my mother home. In our early youth my mother had all her children taught systematically and artistically to cook; and I had generally prepared our supper before I came down to the theatre; and all we had to do on our return was to give our little *plats* a final boil-up. The Balfes had gone abroad; and I had not a single boyish playmate or crony. One little lady-friend I had, the

singularly beautiful daughter of Madame Adelaide, and grand-daughter of Madame Michau, mentioned in the early pages of this book, Rosa, or Roma Guyon La Thière. I read voraciously, not only books, but such newspapers as I could afford to buy out of my pocket-money. The *Times* was obviously beyond my means; but I invested every week in the *Sunday Times* and the *Weekly Despatch;* and when the *Illustrated London News* made its appearance, I used, if I had been "tipped" by either of my kind cousins, to buy a copy of that wonderful picture-paper. Of the *Penny Magazine* and the *Saturday Magazine* I had been a constant purchaser, before we went to Paris; as also of some periodical which mainly existed on piracy upon the leading novelists and tale-writers of the day; but what I chiefly prized was a twopenny weekly with splendidly vigorous woodcut illustrations, drawn, as well as engraved, by one Samuel Williams. One of these periodicals, I think, was called the *Olio*, and another *Parterre*.

I repeat that I was running intellectually to seed for the want of proper scholastic teaching. Of the rules of English grammar I knew positively nothing, and I do not know six of those rules, now. I held on to my Greek; but my knowledge of Latin was rapidly skating away from me; and, to sum up the unsatisfactory state of my culture, I knew a great deal too much French. Such English as I could write was disfigured by Gallicisms; and the first week that I *did* spend at an English school, I was severely reprimanded

for having threatened to "throw by the window" a boy, who had called me a "mangy French poodle." As my career was to be an English, and not a foreign one, it was clear that my learning good English had come to be a case of then or never; and, after much hesitation, an English school was found for me.

CHAPTER XIV.

BOLTON HOUSE, TURNHAM GREEN.

At a Pestalozzian School—Athletics a Waste of Time—Where the Battle of Waterloo was not Won—A Fat Dancing Master and his Method—A Visit to Drury Lane—Amateur Theatricals—Dislike of German—Two Linguistic Phenomena.

It turned out to be the very kind of school for which my soul had instinctively yearned. The Principal was a Mr. John Godfrey Dyne, who occupied a large mansion called Bolton House, Turnham Green, and he dubbed his school a "Pestalozzian" one. The scholastic system pursued by Mr. Dyne had thus much in common with the method of the beneficent educationist of Zürich, that its basis was intuition; that is to say, education through the senses immediately from the objects: it encouraged self-development, and was strict in disregarding all arbitrary and unreasoning instruction or acquisition. There were plenty of rewards attainable for industry and good conduct, and there was no corporal punishment. I am sorry to say that I only remained at this excellent school for twelve months, and that I left it before my education was even near completion. A decent amount of classical instruction was imparted: our Latin master being an Oxford man, named Roberts, whose father held an important post in the War Office. French and German were taught by

an Alsatian gentleman, named Goetz; and I always managed to keep a good place in the German class, although, I must frankly admit that I have never ceased to entertain the liveliest detestation for the Teutonic tongue.

We had a master for drawing, painting, and modelling; and the greater number of the boys followed some handicraft or occupation out of school hours. Some cultivated their little plots of garden ground; others worked in the chemical laboratory, where, if they did manage to stain their fingers all the hues of the rainbow, or burn holes in their pocket-handkerchiefs and cuffs by means of strong acids, they gathered at least some inklings of the magic science. There were carpenters and joiners, and miniature coachbuilders; and my special work out of school was copying music. We learned singing by the "Hullah system," which was then enjoying immense popularity in England; although musicians of the old school were apt to sneer at it as the "Hullah-bulloo" way of teaching singing; but we managed, nevertheless, to sing in good time and tune such pieces as the "Hallelujah Chorus," such glees as "Here in cool Grot," and "When Winds breathe soft," and a few humorous catches, such as, "Ah! how, Sophia, can you grieve?" The transmutation of our, "How, Sophia?" to a "House on fire," and of "Go fetch the Indian's borrowed plumes" to "Go fetch the engines," used to tickle our boyish fancies immensely.

The parts to be sung were copied out with

reed pens and thick Japan ink, on large sheets of cardboard; the process was, in fact, more like painting than writing, seeing that the crotchets and quavers were at least two inches and a-half in height, and the minims as big as hen's eggs. Then we had a violin class, in which I fear that I never got beyond the first two notes of "God Save the Queen;" notes which are, I believe, identical; but good Mr. Dyne, true to his Pestalozzian traditions, forbore to force upon me the study of an art in which, had its first principles been instilled into me in childhood, I might possibly have excelled. So, as in the celebrated case of the decease of Uncle Ned, "I hung up the fiddle and the bow," and devoted myself during the music-practising hours to the pursuit of my beloved practical geometry. In modelling, I made a considerable advance. It occurred to Mr. Dyne to add a portico of Grecian design to Bolton House; and I had the high honour of being allowed to model the figures in the pediment: these figures being afterwards reproduced in Roman cement. The group which I produced represented Minerva, in a head-dress strongly resembling a fireman's helmet, with a book in one hand, and a laurel crown in the other, rewarding a number of studious schoolboys in round jackets and lie-down collars; but as the sides of the triangle diminished in width, the youthful devotees in learning had first to lose their arms, and then their legs, and ultimately assumed the similitude of cherubs without wings. I would give something to see that pediment now; but, ah, me!

Bolton House has long since been demolished, and Minerva and the schoolboys were, I suspect, pounded down into powder for the making of fresh cement. So runs the world away. My early knowledge of the technical process stood me, however, in good stead when, many years afterwards, I was examined as a witness in the celebrated Belt libel case.

We played at fives and rounders and trap-bat-and-ball; but only rarely did we repair to a field between Ealing and Acton to play cricket. Our chief outdoor recreation was a gymnasium, set up in the middle of the spacious playground; the principal apparatus being a structure of timber, very much like an unusually tall gallows, with an unusually long cross-beam; and this erection comprised a thick and a thin pole, a swinging pole, a knotted rope for climbing, and parallel bars at different altitudes, to swing from. I never liked athletics, which, in the darkness of my mind, I regarded, and still regard, as mainly a waste of time; nor do I believe that the great Duke of Wellington ever said, or ever meant it if he did say it, that the Battle of Waterloo was won in the playing-fields of Eton; because, as everybody knows, the illustrious Arthur Wellesley was removed from Eton under somewhat peculiar circumstances, and completed his education at the Military School of Angers, in France.

The heroic Paget, Earl of Uxbridge at Waterloo, and afterwards Marquis of Anglesey, was a Westminster boy; the stern Picton was not of any public school; and Hardinge, the most distinguished Etonian

—next to the Duke—who fought in the immortal campaign of 1815, lost his left hand at Ligny, and was not present at Waterloo at all. The private soldiers in the Duke's army of the 15th June were certainly not Etonians, and the young Guardsmen who were on the field, and were fresh from the historic seminary supposed to be haunted by "Henry's Holy Shade," had no more to do with winning the battle than the midshipmen on board the *Victory* had to do with winning Trafalgar. Waterloo was won by the genius of the Great Captain of the Age; by the prudence and promptitude of his generals, and by the valour of his soldiers of all ranks, gentle and simple.

We all learnt dancing at Bolton House, just as I had done at my *pension* in Paris; my French instructor having been a stout professor, named Boizot, who taught his pupils to keep time in waltzing by gripping them round the waist with his two bony hands, as in an iron vice, and stamping on their feet if they made a false step. He was a short, sturdy man, with very long arms, and had, consequently, a good "purchase" on the tallest boys. At Bolton House our dancing master was a tall thin individual of melancholy mien. His name was Tompkins; and one of our fellows, coming to school after the holidays, brought with him the calumnious tale which he had somewhere picked up that the dancing master was known in professional circles as "Lying Tompkins." He never told us any fib that I am aware of; but give a dog a bad name, and you may as well hang him.

There remains to mention a final item in the curriculum of our studies. At least twice a week we acted stage-plays; and for a month before the annual examination we had a rehearsal almost every day. Shakespearian tuition was imparted to us by a Mr. Otway, who was, I believe, a gentleman of independent means, with a craze for acting. He was an excellent elocutionist, and he ranted. The English play selected for the Midsummer examination was *Julius Cæsar*, which we performed in its entirety; then came the whole of Molière's *Médecin malgré lui;* then the whole of Schiller's *William Tell* in German, and finally, selections from the *Adelphi* of Terence in Latin, and from the *Electra* of Sophocles in Greek, in which I played the Pædagogue. In a grim spirit of humour our preceptor allotted to the biggest dunce in the school the part of Pylades, who, from the beginning to the end of the play, persistently holds his tongue. He was a good-looking dunce, and when a selection from the *Electra* was performed in public made quite a sensation among the ladies. It was certainly not from the possession of any dramatic faculty of my own that I was singled out to take a conspicuous part in these examination theatricals; but I had a turn for languages, a good memory, and a resonant voice; and consequently I was cast to play Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*, Sganarelle in the *Médecin malgré lui*, and William Tell in Schiller's masterpiece. In the selection from Terence I played a very minor part.

A fortnight before the examination all the boys

who were to take part in *Julius Cæsar* were conveyed by specially hired omnibus to Drury Lane Theatre, to witness the performance of Shakespeare's stately tragedy. It was worth witnessing—magnificently worth witnessing—if only from the acting point of view, for the Brutus of the evening was William Charles Macready, and the Mark Antony was the still living Mr. James Anderson. We were bitterly disappointed, when the tragedy had come to a close, at not being allowed to remain to see Planché's extravaganza of *The White Cat;* still we were partially consoled for the deprivation by the specially hired omnibus stopping at a then well-known confectioner's shop in Piccadilly, where we were regaled with what schoolboys call a regular good "tuck out." What with sausage-rolls, Bath buns, plum cake, and Scotch shortbread, we did pretty well. Ginger beer and lemonade were liberally provided; and the principals, Brutus, Cassius, Mark Antony, and Calphurnia—the last a lubberly lad of fifteen—had the choice of a glass of port, or of one of cherry brandy. Brutus preferred port.

In due time the public examination of the pupils at Bolton House was held at the Hanover Square Rooms—a roomy mansion, built late in the last century by Sir John Gallini, who amassed a large fortune as professor of dancing. With him, as I have said, my grandfather had been associated in the Terpsichorean department of the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket; and he was one of my father's godfathers. At these same Hanover Square Rooms my mother gave many concerts; and I never

pass the premises now—converted, I believe, into a club—without a melancholy feeling coming over me. London, when I do gaze upon it—which is rarely—seems to me half ruin and half graveyard. The great room in Hanover Square was crowded by the parents, guardians, and friends of the boys; and the examination was about the queerest medley that it is possible to conceive. The whole school numbered fifty pupils, and thirty gave a performance on the violin; thus beating, by half-a-dozen, Tom Ingoldsby's "four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row," who, under the guidance of Sir George Smart, were said by the imaginative bard to have played a "consarto" at the Coronation of Queen Victoria. I was not one of the thirty fiddlers; but I took my part in the mathematical examination, which mainly consisted in chalking lines on an immense blackboard, and in gabbling through a large number of formulas proving that the angle A B was equal to the angle C D, which most of us, in our heart of hearts, gravely suspected not to be the case. Then we sang, or rather shouted, the "Hallelujah Chorus," and "When Winds breathe soft;" and then began the dramatic performances. We had a good stage and a curtain; but, following the Elizabethan precedent, we dispensed with scenery.

But now came that which was to me a very awkward difficulty. That eminent costumier, Mr. Nathan—I hope that he, or some of his descendants, are still carrying on the business, and are flourishing—had been commissioned to supply the dresses for *Julius Cæsar*—the only piece of the evening which was to be

played in character; and on a long table, in an apartment which was to serve for the nonce as a dressing-room, was laid out a picturesque array of Roman togas, helmets, tunics, breastplates, sandals, and swords. My mother, however, had inexorably set her face against what she called my playing at play-acting; and although she reluctantly consented to my making an elocutionary exhibition of myself, she distinctly warned Mr. Dyne that she would not pay one single penny for the hire of any costume in which Mr. Nathan might, with the approbation of my schoolmaster, choose to apparel me.

What was to be done? In the last moment the resourceful Mr. Dyne, after persuading me to divest myself of most of my raiment, threw a toga, which was very like a tablecloth, over my shoulders; and my lower extremities being clad only in socks and Blucher boots, they did very well, classically, for bare legs and sandals. The quarrel scene with Cassius was a great success; for the boy who played Cassius was one of my intimate enemies, and frequently gave expression in an undertone to his wish that it was all real, and that he could punch my head then and there. In the end there was such hearty applause from the audience that the delighted Mr. Dyne caught me up in his arms and carried me away to the refreshment-room, to regale me with a sponge-cake and a glass of sherry; but I am afraid that ere the audience had lost sight of me, the toga had become dreadfully disarranged, and too much—with too little of the garments which

should have been above them—of the socks and Blucher boots had become visible.

The part of an old man in the Latin play, and that of Sganarelle in the *Médecin malgré lui*, and William Tell in Schiller's drama, we played in ordinary school-boy dress. Sganarelle was all right, for I had long been at home with Molière, but of *William Tell* I am afraid I made a shocking mess. I know that on the following morning at breakfast Mr. Goetz, the German master, quietly remarked, "My gutt poy, you maig at least von onderd and vifty mistaigs last night." I daresay that I made two hundred; for, as I have more than once remarked, I have always entertained an obstinate, and I may say, inveterate dislike for the noble, but to me harsh and austere, German language. I have been in love, in the course of my life, with a great many ladies of a great many nationalities; but I am quite sure that I never made love in German. I am firmly persuaded that if I devoted the next six months of my life to a fresh course of "Ollendorff," and a weekly perusal of Goethe's "Werther," I should not succeed in being amorous in the Teutonic tongue.

But here I will make mention of what I may call two somewhat curious linguistic phenomena. I can still repeat fluently Tell's lengthy speech, beginning, "*Es ist nicht lange her*," although I am sure I have not opened a volume of Schiller in the original for forty years. When, a few years since, the admirable Meiningen troop of actors came to Drury Lane, the principal members of the company were entertained by Henry

Irving at the Lyceum ; and talking to that distinguished artist, Herr Barnay, I recited, right off, the speech descriptive of Tell meeting the hated Austrian, Gessler. Herr Barnay was delighted, and proceeded to address me in colloquial German ; but I shook my head, and told him that not only was I unable to converse with him, but I scarcely understood what he said. Similarly, there has never been erased from my memory the implacable reply, in the flight of the French from Waterloo, of the black Brunswicker, from whom a French soldier begged quarter :—"*Der Herzog von Braunschweig ist gestern getödtet,*" and so saying, he cut the Frenchman down. The merciless retort probably dwells in my memory because, from my youth upwards, I have been a hero-worshipper of Napoleon the Great, and an earnest student of the minutest details of the Waterloo campaign.

CHAPTER XV.

EXPERIMENTS.

In a Studio—Making up Tradesmen's Books—An Unfortunate Publisher—Early Glimpses of Bartle Frere, Alexander Cockburn, and Thackeray—Copying Legal Documents—George Wieland—Scene-Painting—The *Night Dancers*—An Unfinished Opera: A Coincidence—Stories of Macready—A Double Personality—Charles Mathews—A Stock Author—The Origin of *Box and Cox*—Bidding Farewell to Scene-Painting.

I HAVE nothing more to say of my stay at Bolton House, Turnham Green. I was past fourteen; and it had become necessary that I should do something towards earning my own living. I knew a good deal, considering my age, and I could draw with facility; so when the Christmas holidays had come to an end my mother took me to a clever miniature painter, Mr. Carl Schiller, who had just taken a large house in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, directly opposite the residence of a then celebrated and prosperous artist in miniature, Sir William Ross, R.A. I remained some months in Mr. Schiller's studio, working very hard at drawing from plaster casts —or the "round," as art technology has it—and passing most of my evenings at the Princess's, where my mother was still engaged, and where I made numberless sketches of the actors and actresses, not forgetting the ladies of the *corps de ballet*, both in morning dress and in costume. I know nothing about the ballet of the present day; still I can say that my experiences of the

ballerine of 1843 led me to the conviction that they were, as a rule, honest, innocent girls, fond of a romp now and again, but devoid of evil. My mother used to give them prizes—new shoes, neck-ribbons, artificial flowers, and so forth—as rewards for tidiness, punctuality, and general good conduct. One of her special favourites was a tall, graceful *coryphée*, Miss Sophie Burbage, who afterwards became the wife of the renowned scene-painter, William Roxby Beverly.

I was to have been articled for three years to Mr. Schiller; but he did not find miniature painting—which even then was in its decline—very productive, and removed with his family to Liverpool. This must have been some time in 1844. Twenty years passed before I saw him again; and he was then occupied in converting photographic portraits into miniatures in the studio of a well-known photographer at the West End of London. He was delighted to meet me again, and painted an elaborate miniature of myself, which I had framed in a gold locket and which is now in the possession of my wife.

The two years that followed were laborious but scarcely happy ones to me. I was uncomfortable at home; I had a temper, and my mother was also richly endowed with one; and before I was fifteen, I made up my mind to go into the world and earn my own living. It was hard enough to earn, Heaven knows! My early training in mathematics had made me a good arithmetician; and I picked up some money by making up tradesmen's books: notably those of a fashionable tailor,

who lived at 4, St. James's Street, a house now occupied by Mr. Francis Harvey, the print-seller. The tailor's name was Crellin; and he was a kind of connection of mine, having married my Aunt Eliza. I remember that my two elder brothers were so dreadfully shocked at what they considered to be the *mésalliance* committed by my Aunt Eliza, that they could not appease their outraged dignity until they had both run up very long bills with their connection by marriage. Whether those accounts were ever settled, it is no business of mine to inquire.

Crellin was a Manxman—a tall handsome person who looked as most West End tailors do, quite the gentleman. When he came to London to start in business, he was accompanied by a fellow-countryman, an intimate friend, named John Macrone—as handsome and intelligent a young fellow as Crellin himself was. My aunt Eliza's husband dedicated himself to the sartorial calling; Macrone, who had a small capital, resolved to become a publisher and went into partnership with a Mr. Cochrane in Waterloo Place. While Crellin had been courting my Aunt Eliza, young Mr. Macrone had been wooing her sister, my Aunt Sophia; but the match never came off, and Macrone married another lady, by whom he had a family.

Prior, however, to the rupture of the tender relations between young Mr. Macrone and Miss Sophia Sala—this was, I think, in 1836—he, finding that the capital of the publishing firm was urgently in need of expansion, borrowed from Miss Sala the

sum of £500; and I believe that a considerable portion of this money went to pay Charles Dickens for the copyright of "Sketches by Boz." With the subsequent dealings between Dickens and Macrone I have nothing to do. They are fully set forth in Mr. Forster's Life; I am only concerned with that bond for £500. Macrone died in poverty, and his creditors received nothing; he left, moreover, a wife and young children, and Dickens, generous as he always was, edited for the benefit of the family of the publisher, who had certainly not used him very well, two volumes of tales and essays which appeared in 1841 under the title of the "Pic-nic Papers." The work enabled him to put something like £300 into the hands of the widow Macrone; but I scarcely think that the sale was very large of the "Pic-nic Papers," which had been got up on the line of the "Livre des Cent-et-un," which consisted of the voluntary contributions of a number of celebrated French men of letters, who banded themselves together to assist the widow of a well-known Parisian publisher named Ladvocat.

My Aunt Sophia died in the year 1837; and her modest competence went to my Aunt Crellin with reversion in favour of my three brothers, my sister and myself. My Aunt Eliza died in 1850; and the reversion, which included some freehold houses at Camden Town and a modest sum in Consols, came to us. My Aunt's solicitors were a well-known firm, Burgoyne and Thrupp, in Stratford Place, Oxford Street; and when I went to receive the few hundreds of pounds that came to my

share, the senior partner, Mr. T. Burgoyne, produced from a tin box John Macrone's bond, which he had given to my Aunt Sophia. With a quiet smile the man of law asked if I thought that the piece of parchment in question would be of any service to my family. I replied with a smile of reciprocity that none of us were snuff-takers; else the parchment would do very well, with the help of a spatula and a little water, for mixing rappee with Irish "blackguard." This little incident once more reminds me that the world after all is not such a very big village.

Life is a chain of many links; but the spaces between are usually not very wide. "The circles of our felicities," writes Sir Thomas Browne, "make short arches;" and the same, as a general rule, may be said of our sorrows. Here am I, at sixty-six, travel-worn and parcel-blind with incessant labour and study. But here, likewise, by my side in the club smoking-room is a smart, spruce, smooth-faced young gentleman who seems to know as much as I do—and possibly a great deal more—about, not only the present, but the past. If I talk to him about the Chandos Clause in the Reform Bill of 1832, he "caps" me with a reference to the great meeting on Penenden Heath against Catholic Emancipation, and tells me the origin of the "Kentish Fire." I might have attended fifty Derbies before he was born; yet he knows all about Cossack and the Flying Dutchman, West Australian and Wild Dayrell, Blair Athol and Blue Gown. In my own case I am astonished sometimes to remember

how close the connection has been between those persons whom I knew in my youth and those with whom I have been brought into association in middle and in old age. For instance, when I was making up the books of Mr. Crellin the tailor—duties carried on at a high desk something between an auctioneer's rostrum and a pulpit, in a dark corner of the shop in St. James's Street—I saw very many people whom I was destined to meet under very different circumstances in after life. There was an Anglo-Indian civilian, pale and spare, and who had not yet grown a moustache, named Frere. I was afterwards to know him as Sir Bartle Frere. There was a military gentleman, a Colonel Arthur, whose father had been governor of Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania; and Colonel Arthur's son, Sir George Arthur, Bart., I often meet at the Beefsteak Club when I am in town.

There was a slight, active, nattily dressed gentleman with an oval face of much comeliness, who used to drive up in a smartly appointed mail phaeton to the shop, and who usually had some conversation with the tailor as to the state of the odds on some race to come. He was a barrister. Mr. Crellin told me he had had many ups and downs, but was now (in the 'forties) rising rapidly in his profession, having become a Queen's Counsel in 1841, and a year or two later one of the recognised leaders of the western circuit. Many years afterwards I was to meet him in society as Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of England. Once too, ascending the stairs of my book-keeping pulpit,

I just saw the back of a very tall gentleman in a cloak. Cloaks, I have already said, were generally worn by gentlemen in the 'forties. After the gentleman had left, Crellin told me that he was a very clever man, somewhat impecunious; but he was on the staff of *Punch*, and he wrote tales and sketches in the magazines under the pseudonym of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. A year or two afterwards I was presented to him by my brother at a little convivial club in Dean's Street, Soho, known as the "Deanery." The name of the tall gentleman was William Makepeace Thackeray. It was my fortune to know him long and intimately, and he was wont to laugh very heartily when I reminded him of the cloak he had once worn, and of my view of the back of that cloak when he had called at 4, St. James's Street.

Unfortunately there were not always tradesmen's books to be made up, and I had, until the end of 1845, no regular employment; while I had a distressingly regular and hearty appetite, and a landlady—in whose house, somewhere in Soho, I occupied a back attic—whose ideas as to strict punctuality in the payment of rent were of a very inflexible character. After a while I was fortunate enough, through the kindness of Sir Denis Lemarchant, one of the clerks of the House of Commons, to obtain a considerable amount of remunerative employment as a copyist of legal documents. In particular I remember that I transcribed the voluminous will and the codicil of a peer of the realm, deceased. That defunct nobleman's testament boarded and lodged me for at least three weeks.

During the railway mania of 1845, I did exceptionally well; for at that time I could draw on stone both with chalk and with the pen; and I earned from time to time goodly sums by drawing the plans for incipient railways. But I wanted regular employment, however slight the fixed remuneration might be; and that employment I found in a somewhat odd manner. There was a large-public house on the south side of Oxford Market—a long since disestablished emporium, on the site of which now stands a huge block of flats—which tavern was kept by an astonishingly agile mime by the name of George Wieland. Very old playgoers will remember his almost superhuman nimbleness in the part of Asmodeus in the drama of the *Devil on Two Sticks*. My brother, who had now left the Theatre Royal, Dublin, knew Wieland as a theatrical crony, and introduced me to him; and the kindly impersonator of *Le Diable Boiteux* took a fancy to me, and gave me a commission to make a series of lithographic portraits of himself in the various characters which he had impersonated; which portraits were to be used as the labels for his spirit bottles. I succeeded, in his opinion at least, so well that he employed me to execute a work of much greater importance. There was a Foresters' Lodge held at his house; and he proposed that I should paint a large picture in oils representing the antiquities and the regalia of that Ancient Order or highly respectable Benefit Society. The painting was to be executed on linen, so as to serve, when framed, and placed in an opening of the

door of the tavern, as a transparency brilliantly visible by night. I went to work with a will; made a large number of sketches, and arranged them in a decorative design in which all kinds of things relating to Forestry were depicted—bows, arrows, targets, bugle horns, plumed hats, stags of ten tynes, leather belts, and buff boots; and you may be sure that Robin Hood and Maid Marian were not forgotten in this glorified announcement that the Lodge, Number Something or Another, of the Ancient Order of Foresters, was held at this particular tavern.

I got on very well with the drawing; but when it came to the painting, I was perplexed. It was the first time that I had essayed painting in oil; I did not know what was the best medium to use; the surface I was painting on being intended for a transparency, I could not, obviously, "prime" it, and my colours ran. I sought counsel from my brother Charles; and he took the half-finished work to Mr. William Roxby Beverly, who had just come to the Princess's as chief scene-painter. Beverly pointed out the most glaring defects in the picture—if picture it could be called—and advised me to use turpentine as a medium; but the exhibition of my crude production in the painting-room led to results which I had been far from anticipating. Mr. John Medex Maddox, the lessee and manager of the theatre, of whom I have already spoken, took some notice of my pictorial efforts and goodnaturedly asked Beverly if he would take me as an assistant scene-painter; and this, the even better natured artist consented to do; and

during more than a year I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of his instruction without any fee or reward being expected of me; while on the other hand Mr. Beverly had received a large premium from an articled pupil named Gates, who enjoyed no greater advantages in the way of tuition than I did; but he stayed in the painting-room full three years, and was continually at work, whereas I was only occasionally able to take a turn at wielding the double-tie brush and dabbling in distemper.

Mr. John Medex Maddox, although very good-natured, had a frugal mind. He knew that I lacked regular employment, and he said that I should have it; but, on the principle of one good turn deserving another, he proposed that I should render certain little services in the theatre when I was not wanted in the painting-room. These little services included translating comedies and farces from the French; copying out the parts; drawing up the advertisements for the newspapers; taking stock in the wardrobe, occasionally holding the prompt-book at the wing, and helping the treasurer to make out his accounts. For these "little services" my salary was exactly fifteen shillings a week; and I declare that on that income, supplemented from time to time by outside copying work, and by occasionally selling water-colour drawings for a few shillings apiece, I lived for thirteen months, comparatively speaking, royally—that is to say, I had enough; and what growing lad can want or should want more? I paid five shillings a week for an attic close to the

theatre, in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square. Rent was my heaviest outlay; but with the remaining ten shillings I managed to have enough to eat and drink and pay my weekly washing bill. My clothes, I should say, were bought out of the extraneous money I earned by selling drawings and transcribing law papers.

Those thirteen months at the Princess's I can cheerfully recall as being, perhaps, the most felicitous in a life which, chequered as it has been by poverty, by neglect, by disparagement, by danger and misadventure and hardship, and by almost constant pain, has been, I have often said, a happy one. I worked prodigiously hard at the Princess's, at all sorts of occupations save that of acting; but I liked my work, and had, as a rule, my evenings to myself. Half of these evenings I devoted to general study, either artistic or literary. On three nights of the week I went to the theatre to see the performance; not from the front, but from the "flies" high up behind the scenes. From those "flies" I have beheld over and over again Macready in his very finest parts; from those "flies," also, I watched Fanny Kemble, who, for a brief period, had returned to the stage, and who, among other pieces, played in Sheridan Knowles's *Hunchback*. There was a wonderful revival, too, of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Beverly excelled himself in imaginative painting; there was a brilliant ballet, founded on the famous French one, the *Diable à Quatre;* and there was likewise produced,

with triumphant success, a charmingly melodious English opera, called the *Night Dancers*. The music was composed by Edward Loder, the son of old John Loder, the well-known violinist who, when the Princess's was first opened under Maddox's management, was leader of the orchestra. The libretto, the plot of which was founded on the French ballet of *Giselle*, was written by a Mr. George Soane, an elderly gentleman, gaunt and woebegone in mien, seedy in apparel, and with two tall daughters. Gossips used to whisper behind the scenes that the forlorn-looking librettist was the eldest son of the deceased Sir John Soane, the distinguished and wealthy architect, whose principal work is in evidence at the Bank of England, and who disinherited his son for having presumed to write in a literary periodical some disparaging criticisms of the paternal lucubrations on the ruins of Stonehenge.

In connection with an operatic libretto, I have a somewhat strange story to tell. The success of the *Night Dancers* was so great that it incited another well-known English composer, named George Linley, who was a great friend of ours, to think of composing an opera to be produced by Maddox, and to bear the title of the *Bride of Castelnuovo*. I wrote the libretto: my brother Charles contributing some of the words of the songs. George Linley was a Yorkshireman, a fine, stalwart man, who had been in his youth a captain of yeomanry, and used to tell me stirring tales of the "Luddite" riots in 1812. I doubt whether he was a very scientific musician; but he had

a rich gift of melody—melody of which there is triumphant evidence in his two delicious ballads—ballads I hope not yet forgotten—"Constance," and "The Spirit of Love." He married a daughter of the noted Orientalist, Dr. Gilchrist; and he was always in desperately embarrassed circumstances.

I remember, after "Constance" had achieved almost unprecedented success, that he remarked cheerily that he was determined for the future to raise his terms, and never write a song for less than twenty pounds. He never, however, completed the score of the *Bride of Castelnuovo;* and the libretto remained in my mother's hands. Some time in 1848 she had a cook who was exceptionally intelligent and fond of reading, and to whom she occasionally lent books. The cook left—as cooks will do—rather suddenly, but without, as the police reports say, the slightest stain on her character. Some six months afterwards my brother Charles, who was then engaged at the Princess's, received a letter from a lady living at Brompton, and in this epistle she asked him whether he had ever had a cook by the name of Jane C——. He replied that, as yet, he had never gone into housekeeping on his own account; but that his mother, Madame Sala, had once had in her service a cook of the name mentioned by the lady. The next day came another letter from the same correspondent, asking him to come to lunch at two o'clock on the morrow.

He accepted the invitation; and found in an elegantly-furnished villa in the suburb which then used to be

known as "Brompton, near London," a handsome lady, just verging on middle age, who entertained him with refined hospitality. After luncheon, conducting him to her tastefully-appointed boudoir, she took from the drawer of a Boule cabinet a somewhat dog's-eared manuscript, on the cover of which was written—"*The Bride of Castelnuovo:* a romantic opera in three acts, the music by George Linley, the words by Charles Kerrison and George Augustus Sala." She proceeded to tell my brother that she had had for a short time a cook named Jane C——, who left her on quite amicable terms and had emigrated to New Zealand; and she had left behind her in the kitchen-drawer the manuscript in question. This the handsome lady returned to the joint-author of the libretto. The handsome lady just verging on middle age was a Mrs. Howard. I need say no more about her; save that when a friend of hers, called Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, became Emperor of the French, he created the handsome lady—who had been very kind to him in the days of his adversity—Comtesse de Beauregard. It would have completed the curious character of the story had I chanced to meet Jane C—— in New Zealand as the flourishing proprietress of an hotel at Auckland, or Wellington, or Christchurch.

While I was painting and rendering "little services" at the Princess's for the not exorbitant salary of fifteen shillings a week, my mother had quitted the stage to resume her old occupation as a teacher of singing; and my brother was acting, at a salary, I think

of £4 a week. He would certainly, in these days, have been worth from £12 to £15 a week to most managers, for he was as good in comedy as he was in tragedy; his delivery in blank verse was unimpeachable, and he had a strong and melodious singing voice. His professional name was Wynn. Many of the stories relating to my brother and Macready have got into print, and many of them have been absurdly spoilt in the telling; and as I consider myself, as Charles's literary executor, to be the sole assignee of those stories, I shall relate a very few of them as they actually happened.

I must begin by saying that between Macready and my brother there existed a kind of ferocious friendship. The expression may seem paradoxical, but it is literally accurate. Macready, whatever he may have been in private life, had at the theatre a simply horrible temper; and he was in the habit of using at rehearsals, and even in an undertone when he was acting, the most scurrilous and abusive language—language which my brother sometimes passed by with a smile, but which occasionally he hotly resented. He did not mind Macready constantly addressing him as "Beast;" but he objected to having his eyes, his limbs, and his internal organs coupled with terms of the grossest invective. Yet, oddly enough, the great tragedian, with whom he was continually quarrelling, had a grim respect and liking for him. He knew him to be a gentleman and a scholar, and one, moreover, who was a competent judge of pic-

turesque effect and an acute dramatic critic. On one occasion, Macready having to play Othello, and my brother not being included in the cast, the tragedian, on the morning of the performance, thus addressed him: "Beast, I want you to go in front to-night, and give me afterwards a full and candid opinion as to the merits of my acting. Omit nothing; tell me how I played and how I looked. I have an idea that I shall surpass myself this evening." Now, the great actor, I must preliminarily explain, went through a tremendous amount of realistic effort in the part of Othello. It is a fact that in the last scene of the play, he would stand at the "wing" just before going on the stage, clenching his fists, gnashing his teeth; and that he could be heard to mutter fearful imprecations against Desdemona, and savage assertions that he could not disbelieve that which he had been told by his faithful friend Iago. On the stage itself he "lived up" to his part in a manner slightly inconvenient to those who acted with him: collaring some, buffeting others, and pinching poor Desdemona's arms black and blue. Finally, he used, towards the close of the tragedy, to get into such a disorganised physical condition that he was all perspiration and foaming at the mouth; and presented a somewhat shocking spectacle.

My brother duly occupied a seat in the front row of the dress-circle—I scarcely think that there were any stalls at the Princess's in those days—and narrowly watched the performance from beginning to end. Then he went behind the scenes; and repaired to

Macready's dressing-room. The great artist was being disrobed by his dresser, and was panting with excitement in an arm-chair. "Well, Beast, what was it like?" My brother told him that he had derived the highest gratification from the performance, and he had never seen him play Othello more superbly. He was magnificent in his speech to the Venetian Senate; the jealousy scenes with Iago were splendid; the murder of Desdemona was superb, and he died inimitably. Macready's face lighted up more and more as my brother answered *seriatim* his many queries. "'Tis well, Beast;" he observed at last; "'tis well, very well; and now, what was my appearance—how did I look, Beast?" My brother cogitated for a moment, and then with perfect candour replied, "*Like a —— sweep.*" No irreconcilable quarrel followed this outspoken expression of opinion.

On another occasion Macready was to play Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII.;* and my brother was cast for the unimportant part of Cardinal Campeius. Macready always dressed Wolsey very sumptuously, and, bearing in mind the fact that, on the stage at least, Campeius or Campeggio, as a Prince of the Church, held equal rank with himself, he was most anxious that the Envoy of the Pope should wear a dress consonant in splendour with his own; and, consequently, he asked my brother to come to him in his dressing-room before the curtain rose, in order that he—Macready—might be able to judge whether the Campeian canonicals were *en règle.* But the famous actor reckoned without his host. That

host was Mr. John Medex Maddox, a gentleman who I have before hinted had a frugal mind. Charles's cardinalitian panoply had been supplied from the wardrobe of the theatre, and with ultimately disastrous results. At a quarter to seven in the evening of the performance of *Henry VIII.*, my brother made his way to Macready's dressing-room.

The tragedian presented a gorgeous spectacle:—cassock of scarlet damask, cape of the same material, but of rose-coloured hue, point-lace petticoat, scarlet velvet hat and silken tassels, and an emerald ring on the forefinger of the left hand worn over the glove. As for my unfortunate relative, Mr. Smithers, the master tailor, had attired him in a red cassock of coarse serge, a cut paper petticoat, a cape of pink glazed calico, a pasteboard hat covered with red flannel, and an immense pair of white Berlin gloves dyed crimson. Macready cast one look at him, and with the observation "Mother Shipton, by ——!" averted his head in horror and disgust. He went to America shortly after this; and on his return, at the first rehearsal which he held, espied my brother on the stage. He was seen first to bury his head in his hand and then to shut his eyes very tightly. After a while he turned his eyes, still shut, to the prompter, and said: "Emden, is it gone?" Mr. Emden, the father of the well-known architect, and who was afterwards the partner of Robson in the lesseeship of the Olympic, replied: "Who is gone, or what is gone, Mr. Macready?" "The — Beast," replied Macready with a groan. He had, how-

ever, soon afterwards to recognise the presence of my brother, who was playing a not unimportant part in the piece rehearsed, but the words with which he accompanied a shake of the hand were peculiar. He said: "Oh Lord! How do you do?"

With all this, Macready and Charles Kerrison got on generally very well together; and when Bulwer Lytton's *Richelieu* was brought out, the creator of the title-part insisted that my brother should play the *rôle* of François, in opposition to the wishes of Maddox, who was desirous that the character should be supported by a young lady. He was altogether an odd person, this William Charles Macready: high-minded, generous, just; but the slave, on the stage, of a simply ungovernable temper. *Homo duplex.* There were two Macreadys. I never was able to persuade the late Sir Frederick and Lady Pollock, who knew the tragedian intimately in private life—who admired his genius and reverenced his unblemished character—that at rehearsal he could be a bully and a ribald, and use towards women as well as towards men language which a beggar in his drink would not use to his callet. I only remember, with the exception of my brother, two actors with whom he was on terms of even tolerable intimacy; these favoured ones were John Cooper and John Ryder.

Macready exulted in his histrionic triumphs; yet he seemed to hate and to be ashamed of his profession; nor would he ever suffer his children to witness plays in which he himself performed. In private life, where I never met him, he is said to have been a courteous

and polished gentleman, the beloved friend of Dickens, of Jerrold, of Forster, of Bulwer and of Maclise. It is curious likewise to recall that he was extremely popular with the subordinate *employés* of the theatre. One carpenter, I remember, he always "tipped" with a sovereign at the beginning of every season, saying: "Thomas Heaford, I am glad to see you; and you are an honest man;" and he would shake hands with Tom Heaford. It was only on the professional votaries of the sock and buskin that he poured the vials of his wrath. With Maddox he never openly quarrelled; and indeed, on one occasion that doughty little manager had the courage to rebuke him at rehearsal for the unseemly language which he had been using; although he somewhat inconsistently concluded his remonstrance by saying: "It's such a d——d bad example!"

Macready was not a sayer of good things; although upon occasion he could be droll; and he was truly comic in such parts as Doricourt in the *Belle's Stratagem* and James of Scotland in the *King of the Commons*. One certainly humorous remark he made to my brother when Sir Henry Taylor's splendid, but unactable, drama *Philip von Artevelde* was produced at the Princess's. Maddox spent what was then considered a very large sum of money on the production of this piece; and on the first night, in the famous market-place scene, where a riotous and famine-stricken mob were introduced, there were as many as a hundred and fifty "supers" on the stage. Sir Henry Taylor's play was

not precisely damned; but it fell dismally flat; and on the second night of its performance Maddox, always of a frugal mind, cut down the number of "supers" to about forty. I forget what part my brother played; but in the market-place scene, Macready had to lean on Charles's shoulder; and as he did so, pointing towards the sadly diminished crowd, he whispered to him: "Famine has done its work, Beast!"

Towards the close of my stay at the Princess's, Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris joined the company; and their engagement was a brilliantly successful one. Connected with this engagement, I remember a somewhat ludicrous circumstance. Mathews, whom I had known from my childhood, was about to proceed on a provincial tour; and he wanted the parts in two or three comedies and farces copied. I did the work, but I had some difficulty in obtaining payment thereof; however, I managed to screw the drachmas out of him by instalments; and when he went away, he left unpaid a balance of, I think, seven and sixpence. This was in 1847. More than twenty years afterwards Mathews called upon me in Clarges Street, Piccadilly, where I was then living, and asked me whether I would render him some trifling assistance on an occasion which was then imminent. A public dinner at Willis's Rooms was about to be given him, prior to his departure for India; and, characteristically enough, he intended to take the chair himself and to propose his own health. After that I was to take up the running and make the speech of the evening: dwelling, of course, in detail on

the merits of an incomparable light comedian and excellent fellow.

I scarcely remember how it came about that I pleasantly reminded him of that still outstanding balance of seven and sixpence. "For goodness' sake," he said, "put the seven and sixpence in your speech. *Do* put it in your speech; now, won't you? The people will roar with laughter." I promised to do that which he asked me, and I made a passing allusion to the seven and sixpence; but the company did not roar with laughter; they were mainly composed of "pros;" and from the extremity of the banqueting hall there were audible a few hisses; which sibilation only confirmed me in the opinion which I, the son of an actress and the brother of an actor, have long since held, that ordinary "pros" are about the most conceited of mankind. In mentioning that seven and sixpence I had evidently trodden on the corns of the Second Grave-digger, or of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or "Charles his friend."

I can say that there are not many playgoers who can remember Charles Mathews in a practically serious character; yet such a character I saw him assume under the Maddox management. It had occurred to some French playwright to dramatise Richardson's ponderous and pathetic drama of *Clarissa Harlowe*. The drama achieved a considerable success in Paris; and Maddox had it forthwith translated into English by the "stock" or hack-author at the Princess's, a Mr. Reynoldson. I copied out the parts and helped to paint the scenery.

John Ryder played the "heavy father," and wonderful to relate, Charles Mathews played Lovelace. *Clarissa Harlowe* was the reverse of successful. The Mr. Reynoldson whom I have just mentioned was a gentleman of considerable talent, who in his youth had known Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He was for some time on the stage, and was noted as the original Mr. Pickwick in the version of Dickens's novel brought out at the Strand Theatre during the management of Mr. W. J. Hammond. There was a tradition at the Princess's that Maddox was in the habit of locking up Mr. Reynoldson in an upper room in the theatre; leaving him a sufficiency of cold meat and bread and alcoholic stimulants, and not releasing him until he had finished translating the appointed drama or farce: thus practically carrying out the aspirations of the Parisian bookseller of the last century, who was wont to remark that if he could only keep Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot under lock and key, in a garret, without any money and without their pantaloons, they would write him the sweetest little books imaginable, by means of which he would realise as sweet a little fortune. As, however, I shared during many months Mr. Reynoldson's apartment, and in the intervals of my work in the painting-room often helped him in translating, I am able to declare that the lock-and-key story was a baseless myth. On the other hand, I am afraid that the poor stock-author did not get more than three pounds a week.

One word more touching translations. Reynoldson

was away ill; and one morning Maddox gave me a French vaudeville called *Une Chambre à deux Lits*, and bade me render it into English. In the course of a couple of days my work was finished, and was submitted to Mr. Compton, who was then our low comedian; but he failed to see any fun in the farce. Not long afterwards the immortal drollery of *Box and Cox* was produced at the Lyceum; the two male characters being played by Harley and J. B. Buckstone; and *Box and Cox* was only an adaptation of *Une Chambre à deux Lits*, with portions of another French farce grafted on to it. It is necessary to accentuate this fact, as there was produced at the Haymarket, some years previous to 1847, a piece called *The Double-bedded Room*, in which the part of an irascible old gentleman was played, with consummate ability, by William Farren the elder. The adaptor of the screaming little piece at the Lyceum was Mr. Thomas Madison Morton, who, as I have said before, died a Brother of the Charter-house. When he passed away most of the newspapers spoke of him as the "author" of *Box and Cox*.

I left the Princess's soon after the production of the Christmas pantomime, on which I had worked most assiduously not only in helping to paint the scenery, but in assisting to model the masks and other "properties." I left on the most cordial terms with Maddox, who, I daresay, had I asked him, would have raised my ridiculously small salary; but there was growing up within me a conviction that I was not destined to excel as a scenic artist. In architecture I was

fairly proficient; but I had no kind of taste for landscape painting; and I suffered from what was practically a kind of colour-blindness, insomuch that I could not be prevented from mixing black with almost every pigment on my palette; even now no ink is sable enough for me; and at the Princess's I used to be known in the painting-room as "the gentleman in black."

When I went away from Maddox, William Beverly also left the Princess's, to take service under the banner of Vestris and Charles Mathews, at the Lyceum; and I served the great scene-painter, as an assistant, for a few weeks, at a salary of thirty shillings a week, helping in the scenery for one of Planché's extravaganzas. Then my old friend Wilson, who had been second scene-painter at the Princess's, had undertaken a commission to paint a panorama of the city of Mexico; and, in this panorama, I executed all the figures. I little dreamt, while painting *caballeros* in coach-wheel hats, *serapes* and *señoras* in black *ribosos*, that I was destined, sixteen years afterwards, to sojourn in Mexico City, and to wear a coach-wheel hat and a striped blanket, myself. Wilson, however, could not afford to pay me any very considerable sum for the slight help I rendered him. I painted a couple of scenes, a drawing-room, and a cottage for the Standard Theatre, in Shoreditch, and then I bade a reluctant, but definitive, adieu to scene-painting.

CHAPTER XVI.

FACING THE WORLD.

Albert Smith—Shirley Brooks—The Misses Walkinshaw—Angus Bethune Reach—Macready the Victim of a Mistake—The Café de l'Europe and its Patrons—Mr. Jabez Hogg—The "Process" Idea—The Broughs—On the Staff of the *Man in the Moon*—Louis Haghe and Birket Foster—George Cruikshank—Watts Phillips—Penny Dreadfuls—Edward Lloyd—Saville Faucit.

I WAS now nineteen years of age, and desperately poor. My mother had returned to her old quarters at Brighton. I was too proud to ask for help from anybody ; although my good and kind cousins, Elise and Sara, insisted on sending me weekly parcels of groceries and so forth ; but for many months such a thing as dinner was more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. I had accumulated a rather large collection of pen-and-ink drawings, mainly of a would-be comic character ; and one day, when I had reached, as I thought, the extremity of indigence, I happened to meet, in the Strand, an old friend of our family, Mr. Charles Dance, a popular dramatic author. I asked him if he knew any publisher who wanted caricatures to illustrate light literature ; and he told me that there had been recently published a monthly periodical of a facetious kind, called *The Man in the Moon*, which was edited by Albert Smith and Angus B. Reach. I cannot at this time recollect whether Charles Dance sent me at once

with a letter of introduction to Albert Smith, or whether he introduced me to Shirley Brooks, who gave me the letter in question; but, at all events, I know that one forenoon I found myself in the studio—Albert's studio-study—in a house which he occupied in conjunction with his brother Arthur, in Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road.

Albert Smith was then scarcely thirty; but he had been so prolific a writer, he had so swiftly obtained Metropolitan, if not European, celebrity, that he seemed to me to be at least fifty. He has been dead thirty-four years, but I can recall him, as a sturdy-looking, broad-shouldered, short-necked man, with grey eyes, and flowing locks of light brown, and large side-whiskers; later in life he wore a beard; and, on the whole, he bore a most striking resemblance to Mr. Comyns Carr. His voice was a high treble; his study was like a curiosity shop; although the "curios" were not highly remarkable from the standpoint of high art, and were not very antique. Littered about the room, which was on the ground floor, were piles of French novels, in yellow paper covers, dolls, caricatures, toys of every conceivable kind, a *débardeuse* silk shirt, crimson sash, and velvet trousers, the white linen raiment of a Pierrot, cakes of soap from Vienna, made in the similitude of fruit, iron jewellery from Berlin of the historic "*Ich gab Gold für Eisen*" pattern, miniature Swiss chalets, porcelain and meerschaum pipes—although Albert was no smoker—and the model of a French *diligence*.

The owner of this queer assemblage of odds and ends was clad in a blue blouse. Albert had been educated for the medical profession, and a fellow-student of his, in Paris, was, I believe, my gallant and esteemed friend, General Sir Henry de Bathe. I have a suspicion that the author of "Mr. Ledbury and his Friend Jack Johnson," had not entirely abandoned professional practice when I called on him in Percy Street; for there was a large brass plate, with his name on it, at the street door; and the back study, which exhibited signs of the apparatus of a surgeon dentist, was possibly used as a consulting room, if any patients cared to visit Albert, in order to consult him.

He was one of the kindest and cheeriest of mankind, and reminded me that he had seen me when I was a mere boy; when he was bringing out, in conjunction with Charles Kenney, at the Princess's, a burlesque called *Cherry and Fairstar*, Cherry being played by Mrs. H. P. Grattan, who wore, I remember, a tunic, made of some extraordinary fabric, into which spun-glass entered largely. It was supplied, I believe, by a then well-known firm of drapers, Messrs. Sewell and Cross, of Compton Street, Soho, and cost, it was said, three guineas a yard. The work-women in the wardrobe complained, however, that the exceptional fabric was apt to cut their fingers. Albert at once commissioned me to make some comic drawings on wood for the *Man in the Moon*, to the literary portion of which he, Angus Reach, Shirley Brooks, and Charles Kenney were the most constant contributors.

The *Man in the Moon* was at daggers drawn with *Punch*, or, rather, with Mark Lemon and Douglas Jerrold; and Shirley Brooks, destined in after years to be the editor of the drollest and the wholesomest periodical that has ever been published in England, penned in the *Vir Lunâ* a scathing satire, in rhyme, called "Our Flight with *Punch*," in which, while ample justice was done to the writings of Thackeray and Gilbert à Beckett, abuse was unmercifully showered on Jerrold, with whom Albert himself, one of the earliest contributors to *Punch*, had had some bitter personal quarrel. What Brooks's grievance was against the sage of Fleet Street I am unable to remember; but I know that at the time in question he hated the author of "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures" most cordially.

Charles Shirley Brooks was in all respects a remarkable man. When I first knew him he was thirty-two years of age, and eminently handsome. He was the son of an architect of repute, who, among other works, designed the London Institution, in Finsbury Circus. He was trained for the law; but abandoned legal studies to become a dramatist and extravaganza writer, an essayist, and a humorous poet. His standby, however, was journalism; and in this kind he wrote for some time the Parliamentary summary for the *Morning Chronicle*. Whether he was married in 1847 I am not quite sure; but the lady whom he did espouse, and whom, in later years, I had the honour to know very well, was one of two sisters named Walkinshaw, who, from the difference between their

respective complexions, were known in society as "Night" and "Morning":—the *sobriquets* being obviously borrowed from the title of Bulwer Lytton's then just published romance. I had seen the Misses Walkinshaw while I was drawing from the "round," in Mr. Carl Schiller's studio; and that artist painted the miniatures of both young ladies. The future Mrs. Shirley Brooks was a brunette, and, consequently, "Night."

Albert not only gave me at once remunerative work as a comic draughtsman, but sent me with a letter to his co-editor, Angus Bethune Reach, an author and journalist, to whose brilliant talents not half enough justice has been done by a cruelly forgetful generation. He was a perfervid Highlander, born at Inverness, and the son of a Writer to the Signet. When I first knew him he was not more than six-and-twenty. He, too, had a standby, being a shorthand-writer, also for the *Morning Chronicle*, in the gallery of the House of Commons. Shirley afterwards went to Southern Russia, as Angus Reach did to the South of France, to write letters supplementing those of Henry Mayhew in the *Chronicle* on "London Labour and the London Poor." Angus Reach was one of the most laborious and most prolific writers I have ever met with. It was no uncommon thing with him to work sixteen hours a day. Over and over, during the Session, have I dined with him at half-past two in his rooms in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden; and punctually at a quarter to four he would go to the

House to slave at reporting and transcribing his notes until perhaps two in the morning; but he was at his desk again on the morrow at nine, and did not rise therefrom until dinner-time. He wrote innumerable short stories for the magazines, and essays, comic handbooks, and comic "copy" for the *Man in the Moon*. He produced a capital sensational novel called "Clement Lorimer; or, The Book with the Iron Clasps," a romance, unless I am mistaken, of which Dion Boucicault preserved a lively remembrance when he wrote his drama of *The Flying Scud*.

Notwithstanding the tremendous pressure of the work which he did, Angus Reach would find time to enjoy himself, as literary men about town did at that period; and was to be found behind the scenes, or in front of the playhouses, or at supper and singing-rooms, or at the nightly gatherings of a hostelry in the Haymarket, called The Café de l'Europe. This café was kept by a very worthy gentleman, whose name, I think, was Hemming, who had been for some years an actor of considerable standing at the Haymarket, and owed his conversion into a Boniface to a somewhat strange mischance. Macready, in one of his engagements at the Haymarket, was playing Shylock, and the part of Tubal was assigned to a Mr. Gough. Now, the dress of Tubal, as a Jew of Venice, was precisely similar in pattern, if not in texture, to that of Shylock. It was, in a sumptuary sense, a case of Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius over again. Hemming, being at the foot of the staircase leading to the dressing-

room, descried, as he thought, his friend Gough, attired as Tubal, slowly ascending the stairs. Forthwith he proceeded to indulge in the lively form of practical joking known as "ballooning"; that is to say, he placed his two hands on Tubal's hips, and, carrying him off his feet, violently propelled him upstairs to the landing.

Arrived there, the supposed Tubal turned round to reveal, to the horror-stricken Hemming, the countenance, empurpled with fiercest wrath, of William Charles Macready. "I am sure I beg your pardon, sir," stammered the actor; "but I took you for Mr. Gough." "*He took me for Mr. Gough—for Mr. Gough!*" re-echoed the outraged tragedian, casting his eyes upwards, as though invoking the interposition of the Avenging Sprite. Hemming was discharged; but his friends rallied round him and enabled him to set up in business as landlord of the Café de l'Europe. In the coffee-room thereof used to gather night after night many of the wits and good fellows of the period, histrionic, artistic, literary, and legal. There one met Horace Mayhew and Percival Leigh, of *Punch;* Boucicault; Harry Baylis—the Hal Baylis who drives the "Wain of Life" in Thomas Hood's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Clapham Academy." There was also a Mr. Frederick Mahomet, or Mahomed, the son of a truly worthy East Indian, whom I remember in my earliest childhood as a proprietor of some baths at Brighton, associated with which was a shampooing department, which apparently benefited

the proprietor's clients to so great an extent that the vestibule of the establishment was hung with the crutches of former martyrs to rheumatism, sciatica, and lumbago, Mahomed's vigorous and scientific shampooing having restored them to health.

The shampooer was, I think, an eccentric; and, in his moments of unbending, used to sing to some Oriental tune, swaying his body to and fro meanwhile, a song of which I can only remember the first line, and the refrain—

> "The ducks and the geese have all come over,
> Sakerdeen Mahomed, Sakerdeen Mahomed!"

Whence the ducks and geese had come, and whether they had emigrated for the purpose of being shampooed by the excellent Sakerdeen Mahomed, I have no means of ascertaining. Another gentleman, who had something to do with Mordan's gold pencils, was also a frequenter of the Café de l'Europe; where, too, might be seen almost every night a tall, elderly gentleman, whose polished and stately manners always used to put me in mind of Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison. He had had a curious career. He was a Scottish baronet of ancient descent, and had succeeded to the title in youth; but the widow of a pre-deceased brother having given birth to a son and heir, he was unbaroneted. His nephew, however, died, and the tall old gentleman once more became a Bart.

The *Man in the Moon* was financed by Messrs. Ingram and Cooke, the proprietors of the *Illustrated*

London News; and the office of the little periodical, which Albert and Angus edited, was in Crane Court, Fleet Street; the cashier being a Mr. Jabez Hogg, afterwards to be known and celebrated as Jabez Hogg, M.R.C.S., Fellow of the Royal Microscopic Society—of which he was first president—consulting surgeon to several hospitals, and Fellow of a host of scientific societies. When I first had the advantage to know him he had brought out a manual of photography. This drew him into close contact with Herbert Ingram, the founder of the great illustrated paper, who had early conceived the idea that photography could be utilised in connection with illustrated journalism. Mr. Ingram's watch, in this regard, only went a little too fast. He died before the introduction into pictorial journalism of those sooty, smoky, and blurred "processes" with which the illustrated press, high and low, is now afflicted.

There was also engaged, in the commercial department of the *Illustrated News* itself, a gentleman by the name of Barnabas Brough, who had four brightly clever sons and two as clever daughters. It is only of two of the sons that I intend at present to speak. These were Robert Barnabas and William. Mr. Brough, senior, had been in business at Liverpool; and in that mighty city Robert and, I think, William, had tried their 'prentice hands in comic journalism, in a little paper called *The Liverpool Lion.* Summoned by their sire to the Metropolis, Robert became a contributor, both literary and artistic, to the *Man in the Moon;*

while the two brothers Brough very soon obtained celebrity as joint-authors of burlesques at the Haymarket Theatre. Robert married Miss Elizabeth Romer, the daughter of a well-known watchmaker in Liverpool, a kinsman of the famous English *prima donna* Miss Romer, and of Frank Romer, a professor of music, whose son, after taking the great prize of a Senior Wrangler at Cambridge, is now an English judge, universally respected for his learning, and as widely esteemed for the amiability of his character.

It was not only on the *Man in the Moon* that Albert Smith gave me employment; he was continually bringing out little shilling illustrated books of waggeries—Natural Histories of "the Gent," the "Medical Student," "The Ballet Girl," "Physiologies of Evening Parties," "Pottles of Strawberries," "Wassail Bowls," "Bowls of Punch," and so forth, most, if not all, of which were published by Mr. David Bogue, of Fleet Street, hard by the Church of St. Bride, and over against the publishing office of *Punch*. The artistic staff of the *Man in the Moon* numbered, in addition to your humble servant, a prolific draughtsman by the name of Archibald Henning, of whom I shall have something more to say anon, and Mr. H. G. Hine, the drollest of draughtsmen, and one of the earliest of the *Punch* artists. He had already attained some degree of reputation as an artist in water-colours, and was known among connoisseurs as the executant of a most subtle work in aquarelle, called "London in a Fog."

Few, however, of those who knew him suspected that, in after years, he was to be one of the most conspicuous members of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours. Strange indeed is the genesis of some of the water-colour artists whom I have known in my time. Louis Haghe, who was originally a scene-painter, and lost his right hand by the desperately rapid running-down of the cord of a windlass in the painting-room, I remember as a partner in the firm of Day and Haghe, chromo-lithographic artist engravers, and printers, in Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields; while Birket Foster, another famous water-colourist, worked for a long time as a draughtsman on wood for Ebenezer Landells, the engraver, and for Henry and James Vizetelly, whose offices were at Peterborough Court, Fleet Street, on part of the site of the existing palatial bureaux of the *Daily Telegraph*. The future renowned portrayer of English river sylvan scenery drew at least one comic cartoon for *Punch*. This was the travesty of George Cruikshank's etching of "Jack Sheppard carving his Name on the Beam;" *Punch's* "Jack" being Lord John Russell, when Prime Minister.

To one of the little shilling books, "A Bowl of Punch," I was called upon by Albert to contribute illustrations. He had translated Bürger's "Ballad of Lenore;" and the margins of the pages were, I will not say adorned, but illustrated, with tiny woodcut-vignettes from my pencil. They were mainly sentimental; and some of them, as befitted the ballad, were ghastly; the

inspiration for the last-named being derived from the sumptuous outline illustrations to Bürger, drawn by the renowned Moritz Retsch, the creator of the outlines illustrating Goethe's "Faust," the "Fight with the Dragon," and of the "*Pfarrer's Tochter von Taubenheim.*" My drawing these thumbnail-vignettes led to my being introduced, first to Mr. Bogue, the publisher, and subsequently to the Brothers Vizetelly, who engraved my drawings on the blocks.

At Mr. Bogue's I often met dear old George Cruikshank, to whom, as a boy, I had gone with a portfolio full of pen-and-ink drawings, when he resided in Amwell Street, Pentonville. I remember that he gave me very good advice, counselling me to take the earliest opportunity to begin the study of artistic anatomy; for that, he said, "will set you all right with your pelvis; and what are you, and what can you do, if your pelvis is wrong?" I was so ignorant at the time that I obscurely imagined that the pelvis was a convertible term for the stomach-ache; but in process of time, when I began to work in Carl Schiller's studio, I found out all about the pelvis, and remained a diligent student of artistic anatomy until my eyes refused to serve me, graphically, any longer. George—if I may be allowed to use an Americanism which has almost become an English expression—had pelvis on the brain. Many years afterwards I enjoyed the intimate friendship of Watts Phillips the dramatist, whose plays, notably, the powerful drama of *The Dead Heart*, should have brought him a large fortune; but,

as a matter of fact, it barely brought him food and shelter. Watts Phillips, who was a most facile draughtsman and pictorial humourist, had been an articled pupil of George Cruikshank; and it used to amuse me exceedingly when he told me that George was perpetually enjoining him to "take care of his pelvis," without which, artistically, no success could be attained. In this respect I am afraid George must be regarded in the light of a guide-post. He set you in the right direction, but he did not travel thither himself; and his figures exhibit few signs of anatomical proficiency; yet did my friend William Romer, the brother of Mrs. R. B. Brough, and who was a student of the Royal Academy, tell me that he has often seen George Cruikshank, when he must have been more than seventy years of age, sedulously drawing in the Life School at Burlington House, during the time when Charles Landseer, R.A., was Keeper. More than half a century before he had been a pupil at the Royal Academy at Somerset House, under the Keepership of Henry Fuseli.

I need scarcely observe that I required something more than the sum which I earned by the little drawings I made for the *Man in the Moon* and for Mr. Bogue, to keep body and soul together. There was a Mr. Fitz-James, an actor of some note, who, during the railway mania, had turned outside broker—"stag" was the less complimentary term applied, in 1845, to the financial Bohemian who hung about Capel Court—and had made a good deal of money; but *ce qui vient par la*

flute s'en va par le tambour; and Mr. Fitz-James returned to the stage. I knew him well, and he gave me a letter to one Mr. Calvert, a wood-engraver, who lived "over the water," in the Belvedere Road, Lambeth. Mr. Calvert was not by any means a high-art xylographer; he was, indeed, exclusively employed in preparing the blocks for the illustration of a number of cheap, and it must be admitted, vulgar weekly publications—prominent among which was a large sheet called the *Penny Sunday Times;* and he also furnished the illustrations to a large number of novels published in weekly numbers, to which was given the generic title of "Penny Dreadfuls." He himself employed the draughtsmen, who drew on the blocks the design which he engraved, or rather chopped; and he was glad to have my assistance, because I had been so long in a theatre that I had an extensive knowledge of costumes of almost every country and almost every period. So he set me to work at once; and I used to spend from three to four hours every morning at his studio in the Belvedere Road. He was an odd fish; he would work desperately hard until dinner time, which was at one p.m.; but after that repast he would not do another stroke of work; and for the remainder of the afternoon and evening he devoted himself to recreation—chiefly, I should say, to skittles.

I should add that the *Penny Sunday Times* and the "Penny Dreadfuls" were the property of a Mr. Edward Lloyd—afterwards to be very well-known as the founder and proprietor of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* —who, towards the close of his life, was elected by

the Political Committee of the Reform Club a member of that distinguished body. Murders were the topics which I generally treated in the *Penny Sunday Times;* and when there was a lack of assassinations, one had to fall back upon such topics as child-stealing, incendiarism, burglary under arms, and the infliction of the knout on Russian princesses. The titles of the "Penny Dreadfuls," with one exception, I forget; but there were scores of them. The one which I recollect was a romance of the days of Edward IV., and it bore the attractive title of "The Heads of the Headless." The author of this marrow-freezing fiction was an old gentleman named Saville Faucit, who had been, I fancy, an actor and a playwright, and who was the father of the delightful actress, Miss Helen Faucit, now Lady Martin. Mr. Edward Lloyd, Mr. Calvert, and I got on very well on the whole for several months; although, on one occasion, the proprietor of the "Penny Dreadfuls" sent me a mild letter of remonstrance, begging me to put a little more vigour into my drawings on wood. "The eyes," he wrote, "must be larger; and there must be more blood—much more blood!"

Calvert had only one assistant as a wood-engraver; this was an aged practitioner, by the name of Armstrong, a person whom I shall always remember, and who was, to me, singularly interesting, inasmuch as he had been a pupil of Thomas Bewick, the father of modern English wood-engravings. He had a delightful store of stories to tell me about Bewick himself, about

his pupils, Harvey and Landells, and Luke Clennell; and he could remember when John Gilbert, then quite a lad, had begun to make drawings on wood, and would accept so small a sum as half a guinea for an initial letter. A good many outside draughtsmen were employed by Calvert; and among them was Robert Cruikshank, the brother of the famous George. There was also an artist, whose name I forget, who, in the days of the "Annuals," and "Amulets," and "Keepsakes," and "Offerings," and "Forget-Me-Nots," and other sumptuously illustrated gift-books, had been employed to make the pencil-drawings for the line-engravers to work from. More delicate pencilling than his I have rarely beheld; but it was lamentable to see his beautiful cross-hatching ruthlessly slashed by Calvert's graver and shading tools; while poor old Mr. Armstrong, who in his day had executed work of the highest kind, was fain to be also a "scauper" and a slasher, because the engraver could not afford to pay him a sufficient sum for really artistic work.

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING ON.

The Poet Bunn's "Word with *Punch*"—My Collecting Crazes—A possible Final Cause—Learning to Etch—First Appearance in Print—Anti-French Feeling in London and the Production of *Monte Cristo* at Drury Lane—Appointed Editor of *Chat*—Sworn a Special Constable—Grisi's Mistake in the National Anthem—Sedition and Loyalty at the Opera.

I GOT rather tired of "Penny Dreadfuls" about the beginning of 1848. A firm of engravers in Paternoster Row, by the name of Nicholls, gave me a remunerative commission for a series of reduced copies of Kaulbach's charming illustrations of "Reynard the Fox;" while for Ebenezer Landells, also a well-known wood engraver, I drew the illustrations to Alfred Bunn's "Word with *Punch*." To Landells belongs the credit of being the founder of the first illustrated newspaper specially intended for the edification of the fair sex. This was *The Lady's Newspaper*, for which I made many drawings; and I should say that the familiarity which I was obliged to acquire with regard to frills, flounces, and furbelows, together with my experience as a periodical stocktaker in the wardrobes of the Princess's Theatre, gave me that taste for collecting fashions and fashion-books, which has been one of my many literary crazes. Among the others are a persistent and fierce desire of getting together everything graphic or plastic relating to Napoleon the Great and the Duke of

Wellington. Next in intensity I note the craze of collecting cookery books: that *penchant* I ascribe to having been, as I have before pointed out, practically taught to cook when I was a boy. An almost equally active propensity to gather up various editions of "The State Trials," "The Newgate Calendar," "The Malefactor's Register," "The Causes Célèbres," and any odd volumes of the "Old Bailey Sessions Papers" that I can come across, I cannot easily account for. But everything has its final cause. The final cause of bread is to be eaten; of a so-called impregnable fortress, to be taken; of a burglar-proof safe, to be forced open by burglars. Perhaps the final cause of my collecting criminal literature will be that I shall be hanged.

I still yearned for that regular employment which, although at a ridiculously small salary, I had enjoyed at the Princess's. Taking the good weeks with the bad ones, I could earn, when I was about nineteen, some thirty-five shillings a week; but there were weeks when I did not earn more than ten or twelve shillings. I always lived in a garret, first in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, next in Carlisle Street, Soho, and then in Poland Street, Oxford Street. In the last-named thoroughfare lived a copper-plate engraver, in whose shop window there was a very beautiful working model of a copper-plate printing press. I can see the wheel, the roller, the blanket, and the tiny copper-plate now. I could already draw minutely, if not symmetrically, in pen and ink, and I resolved to teach myself to etch.

I dined for a week on bread and cheese—sometimes on the bread without the cheese—and I purchased Fielding's "Art of Engraving," which cost me, I think, fifteen shillings. Then I bought a good-sized plate and a set of etching tools; and after three or four dismal failures, I managed to "lay the ground" of and "smoke" my plate. A carpenter made me a large square frame over which I stretched a sheet of silver paper, and which I attached by means of a string to the window bolt; and then I worked with a will, covering the plate with various designs executed with more or less elaborate cross-hatching. I shall never forget the childish delight which I experienced when I saw the laborious work of my etching needle shining in a glorious golden net-work through the sable varnish of the "ground." I had carefully read and re-read Fielding's directions for using the aquafortis, pouring it off, and "stopping out;" but I felt nervous on the subject, and consulting the tradesman from whom I had purchased the plate, I went, by his advice, to a practical pictorial engraver who lived in a court off Drury Lane.

There was not the slightest pride about him, for I found him in his shirt-sleeves in a room full of squalling children, with a short pipe in his mouth and a pot of half-and-half by his side. He agreed to "bite in" my plate for me for seven and sixpence, and to have it ready for me in a couple of days. I paid down in advance half the stipulated sum; but when at the appointed time I returned to the court off

Drury Lane, I found, to my horror, that the engraver who had no pride about him had treated my poor needle-work as ruthlessly as Calvert used to treat the delicately drawn blocks submitted to him. My delicate cross-hatching had been bitten into by splodges of black, and in some instances unsightly holes had been burnt in the copper. Obviously he had used too strong an acid, or he had allowed the aquafortis to remain too long on the plate. At all events, the disaster put me for a certain time altogether out of conceit with etching, and even with drawing.

How it occurred to me, I declare that I am wholly unable to remember, but it must have been very shortly after the catastrophe of the copper-plate, that I made up my mind that I would try and write something for the periodical press. I had already made one appearance in print—that had been in the winter of 1845, when I sent a short story called "Chew Loo Kwang; or The Stags of Pekin," to the dear old *Family Herald.* It was an apologue burlesquing the railway mania and the exploits of one George Hudson, then known as the Railway King. The story was, to my great astonishment and delight, inserted in the *Family Herald;* but I was so raw—so "green" I may say—at the time, that I never asked to be paid for it; and when at Christmas time I sent in another story which was called "Barnard Braddlescrogs," and which I know was a shameless imitation of Dickens's "Christmas Carol," the little contribution was neither published nor returned to me. Once more I was so

verdant that I did not ask to have my manuscript returned. Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other. I was further discouraged by the reception accorded to my finest literary effort by my mother's friends at Brighton. A reverend gentleman, whose name I am happy to have forgotten, pointed out that there were several unjustifiable divorces between my nominative and accusative cases —as if I ever knew anything about the nominative or accusative cases!—and an authoress, then somewhat popular, Miss Louisa Stewart Costello, opined that in attempting authorship I had entirely mistaken my vocation. Her brother, however, Dudley Costello, who had been a captain in the army, and was well known as a magazine writer, bade me be of good heart; but for the time I lost that heart, and between 1845 and 1848 I wrote nothing for publication.

In February of the year just mentioned, there broke out that revolution in France which, after three days' carnage, hurled Louis Philippe from his throne and drove that politic monarch and his family into exile. I scarcely think that the oddly-assorted gathering of politicians who formed the Provisional Government after the Republic was proclaimed, were unanimous in desiring the abolition of the monarchy. Ledru Rollin and Armand Marrast may have been sincere Republicans; but I apprehend that Lamartine the poet, and Arago the astronomer, and Odilon Barrot and Crémieux were more speculative than militant democrats. At all events, the revolution of February had

to run its appointed course; to be succeeded after four years' plundering and blundering by the unscrupulous, but on the whole salutary, despotism of the Second Empire.

One of the earliest results of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity in France, was the violent expulsion therefrom of a large number of English workmen who had been employed in French factories. This excited a sufficiently bad feeling in this country against France; and the feeling was further embittered by the arrival in England of the company of the Parisian Théâtre Historique, who, under the management of M. Hostein, proposed to give at the National Theatre, Drury Lane, Alexandre Dumas's interminable drama of *Monte Cristo*. When I say interminable I speak relatively; but the bulky drama in question did extend over at least two nights. Theatrical, literary, and journalistic London was forthwith split up into two camps. There were the Gallicans and the anti-Gallicans: one faction insisting that M. Hostein and his *troupe* should be received with cordial hospitality; the other vehemently protesting against "a pack of foreigners" being allowed to usurp the boards of old Drury.

On the first night of *Monte Cristo* something like an "O.P." riot took place. I was in it, on the anti-Gallican side. I was a pugnacious youth with a great capacity for quarrelling and getting my head punched; and I think that on the evening in question I emerged from the auditorium of Drury Lane with my clothes torn half off my back, my hat crushed

into a pulp, and my visage decorated with at least one black eye, most assuredly not of a lovely appearance. The turbulent pittites hooted the French actors, threw potatoes and cabbage stumps from the adjacent market on to the stage, and even pelted with analogous missiles Albert Smith and a strong party of Gallicans who were seated in the front row of the dress-circle. So violent, indeed, was the partisanship displayed on the occasion, that it led to a temporary rupture between kind old Albert Smith and myself. Charles Mathews the comedian, and Beverly the scene-painter, were also strong Gallophobes. The performance of *Monte Cristo* at old Drury was swiftly discontinued; but the triumph of John Bullism did not put me into the way of repairing my damaged apparel or procuring a new hat.

Something, however, I felt must be done, under the circumstances; so I wrote a poem in the "Tom Ingoldsby" metre, and called it "The Battle of Monte Cristo." This lucubration I forthwith took to the office of *Chat*, a little halfpenny weekly paper published at 304, Strand, the west corner of Holywell Street:—premises which are at present occupied by the shop of a well-known bookseller. There was no editorial sanctum at the *Chat* office; and the proprietor, Mr. Frederick Marriott, was sitting behind the counter by the side of the editor, Mr. Thomas Littleton Holt; while the publisher, whose name I subsequently found was Wilks, discreetly occupied a stool at a high desk in the background. Mr. Marriott very civilly read my poem, giving at the same time, from the till,

change for a shilling to a small boy who had come to buy four copies of *Chat*. Then he handed the verses to the editor, Mr. Holt, a middle-aged gentleman, with very bushy whiskers, and—a rarity in those days—moustaches. Mr. Holt wagged his head approvingly; and Mr. Marriott informed me that he should be very glad to publish my poem; and he handed me a sovereign, saying that there was no need for me to have a proof of it, as the editor could touch it up and make it, if it was thought desirable, a "little spicier."

The publication of "The Battle of Monte Cristo" led to my contributing every week short articles, would-be humorous poems, and comic paragraphs to *Chat;* and in about six weeks Mr. Marriott, to my surprise and joy, told me that Mr. Holt was leaving him to start a paper of his own; and that he should be very pleased if I would edit the paper. I was just twenty years of age, and I knew as much about editing as I did about driving a locomotive engine; but I at once accepted the post, and very soon mastered the mechanical details of a calling which I was destined to pursue long afterwards under very different circumstances. The salary was small, but it was quite enough for my needs; and it was paid with unflagging punctuality every Saturday morning at seven o'clock, when the publication of *Chat* took place; the first proceeding of Mr. Wilks being to pay his own salary and mine out of the cash received from the newsvendors' boys.

The position was altogether a strange one for a young fellow who had not yet come to his twenty-first year. Indeed, I so imperfectly recognised the fact that I was still a minor, that two days before the momentous April 10th, 1848, I went down to Marlborough Police Court, and was duly sworn in as a special constable, in view of the contingency of a riot at the great Chartist meeting on Kennington Common, at which the fiery democrat, Feargus O'Connor, was to preside. My publisher, Mr. Wilks, was sworn in at Bow Street, and had his station assigned him in the courtyard of Somerset House, which immense edifice was additionally crowded with regular troops. The Blues were in the basement in Lancaster Place ; but they were invisible throughout the day ; as were the whole of the 20,000 soldiers, horse, foot, and dragoons, who had been distributed all over the metropolis by that great master of tactics and strategy, Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, K.G. There were soldiers in the prisons ; soldiers in the workhouses ; soldiers in the hospitals ; Life Guards and Light Dragoons in the livery stables ; but not a red-coat was to be seen. The preservation of law and order was entirely entrusted to the Metropolitan Police, under the orders of Commissioners Mayne and Rowan, who carried out their instructions with admirable discretion, good-temper, and firmness ; and the special constables, of whom there were, I should say, about 80,000, were massed at certain central points, but were not happily called upon to act.

I was posted in St. James's churchyard, Piccadilly; and a remarkably odd gathering some people may have considered us. Mr. Benjamin Lumley, lessee and manager of Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, had brought down the whole of his carpenters and scene-shifters, all properly attested, and all provided with stout wooden truncheons. There had been no time to paint those batons; still there could be no doubt that the raw timber could be reckoned upon to administer the most sounding of thwacks to seditious pates had the occasion demanded. The assistants of nearly every tradesman in Piccadilly and Regent Street, together with the tradespeople themselves, bankers and solicitors and their clerks, actors, and doctors, and "men about town," were banded together, for the nonce, in perfect equality and harmony. Close to me was the then Earl of Chesterfield; and not far off, with a badge at his button-hole or round his arm, I forget which, and his truncheon in one kid-gloved hand, was a gentleman of middling stature and with a very heavy moustache. This was Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte; he was just forty years of age; he had returned to France immediately after the revolution of February; but the Provisional Government had politely requested him to take himself off again to the place whence he came.

On the night of Saturday, the 8th of April, I went to the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden. What the opera was I forget; but I know that I heard the famous baritone, or, rather, *basso cantante*, Fornasari.

The audience was an immense one; but it was restless throughout the first act of the opera, and cries for "God Save the Queen" grew every ten minutes louder and louder. At the end of the first act, the National Anthem was sung: each of the principals taking a verse. The effect was altogether magnificent; but there was just one brief ripple of merriment when Grisi sang the verse apportioned to her. That wonderful *cantatrice* could never master the pronunciation of the English language. Quarrelling with Mario once, and having denounced him in French and Italian, she thought that, by way of a change, she would abuse him in English. She wished to bestow upon him the opprobrious epithet of "beggar"; but she could not succeed in calling him anything else but a "*bakère*." Similarly, dear Mrs. Stirling, having to act the part of a heroine who spoke broken English, and wishing to call the villain of the piece a traitor in French, addressed him as *traiteur*. Grisi at Covent Garden made only one mistake in her verse. She sang—

> "Confound their politics;
> Frustrate their knavish tricks;"

but instead of singing—

> "In Thee our hopes we fix,"

she gave the new reading of—

> "In Thee our hopes we *sticks*."

The audience had no time to laugh; for a moment afterwards a person at the back of the gallery was

so ill-advised as to hiss the National Anthem generally. I shall never forget the thunderous sound which immediately followed this rash act; it was the sound of the individual who had hissed being kicked down six flights of stairs.

The time between February and April, 1848, was a very troublous one in these kingdoms. There were riots in Glasgow, and in a few English provincial towns. Ireland was simmering with discontent; and Smith O'Brien, Mitchel, and "Meagher of the Sword" had been arrested for seditious writing and speaking; two of them to be afterwards tried and convicted for the more serious offence of high treason. In London the Chartists were, to say the least, troublesome; and there was a small Physical Force party who advocated extreme measures, and one of whose leaders—a black man by the name of Cuffy—was tried for treason-felony and transported. Trafalgar Square was in a chronic state of unrest and semi-seditious tumult; and for a very short period the Metropolitan police were armed with cutlasses. I note the fact; since in *The Man in the Moon* there appeared a vignette representing a police-constable requesting a civilian to "move on." The request was accompanied by a blow from the cutlass, which sent the civilian's head flying round the corner of the next street. I cannot exactly remember whether it was my pencil which was responsible for this comment on public affairs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EARLY DAYS OF QUILL-DRIVING.

The "Australian Nights' Entertainment"—Reading up Convict Literature—The Old Reading-Room of the British Museum—Thomas Miller, the Basket-Weaving Poet—Dramatic Criticism—A Negro Tragedian—Mrs. Warner—Samuel Phelps—The Bettys—The Derivation of "Spencer"—The Elder Farren: "The Cock Salmon of the Stage"—*The Death Warrant* becomes *The Guide to Life*—Ada Isaacs Menken and her Matrimonial Proclivities—Lola Montes—Duke Charles of Brunswick and Louis Napoleon.

MEANWHILE I had quite enough to do with my task of editing *Chat*. I wrote nearly the whole of the paper myself; of course with some slight assistance from the familiar paste-pot and the harmless, necessary scissors. Our contributors were very few, for the sufficing reason that the proprietor's capital was a somewhat limited one, and that *Chat* was not a very prosperous enterprise. Mr. Holt sent a column of "copy" now and again; and we had a tolerably regular contributor in the person of a certain Henry Valentine, who had been a theatrical "dresser," and had a number of queer stories to tell touching the elder Kean, Charles Mayne Younge, Vandenhoff, Macready, Phelps, and other shining lights of the dramatic profession. My own contributions, exclusive of countless paragraphs of dramatic criticisms, comprised a series of essays, called "A Natural History of Beggars"; and a series of tragi-comical tales, supposed

to have been related by convicts at the Antipodes, while lying in their hammocks after sunset; and to these tales I gave the comprehensive title of "The Australian Nights' Entertainment." Little did I think that I was destined six-and-thirty years afterwards to travel in Australia and to hear much stranger tales than I had woven about persons of both sexes, who had left their country for their country's good.

One of my stories was that relating to a convict, who, with his mate, escaped into the bush, where they ran short of provisions; to aggravate matters the two rascals quarrelled, and in a brawl one of them was killed. The survivor was asked what his next proceeding was, to which he replied, very philosophically, "I ate him." If you have ever chanced to read Marcus Clarke's "For the Term of His Natural Life," you will come across horrors not much less harrowing than those which I set down in the little halfpenny paper. There may be a reason for this. Marcus Clarke, who was many years my junior, seems to have gone to the very same sources of information touching convict-life that I resorted to in 1848. In 1876 he was appointed assistant-librarian in the public library at Melbourne, and must have studied attentively the blue-books relating to convicts in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land:—now Tasmania: Victoria never having been, luckily, a convict colony; although there was, at one period, a penal establishment at Williamstown, the port of

Melbourne, where, in March, 1867, Price, the superintendent, was murdered by a gang of eighty convicts, who nearly tore the unhappy official to pieces.

Now, in 1848, I had been toiling through analogous convict literature in the reading-room of the library of the British Museum. It was one of my earliest literary friends, Mr. Frederick Guest Tomlins, a well-known journalist, political writer, and dramatic critic, who gave me a letter of recommendation to Sir Henry Ellis, the predecessor of Sir Antonio Panizzi as chief librarian of the Museum. The imposing Pantheon-shaped Hall of Study, devised by Panizzi, had not yet been erected; and the reading-room was a spacious, but rather musty-smelling, apartment on the first floor of old Montague House. The first book I asked for was Dugdale's "Monasticon," a work which I had continually been referred to, but upon a copy of which I had hitherto never been fortunate enough to stumble. Then I began to browse among the Blue Books, and those touching Australia exercised so grim a fascination over me that I began to conceive the idea of "The Australian Nights' Entertainment." Those tales, together with "The Natural History of Beggars," are past praying for, in a literary sense. The business arrangements of *Chat*, to say nothing of the journalistic ones, were carried on in a slightly rough and ready fashion; and for many months the publisher omitted to comply with the law requiring the deposition in the Museum library of a copy of every book, newspaper, or periodical issued from the press. I am afraid that my literary

contributions to *Chat* are not to be found in Great Russell Street.

The little journal was printed for a while by a Mr. Rock, whose place of business was over the water, close to the Elephant and Castle; and at his office, whither I repaired every Friday to correct my proofs, I frequently met a somewhat singular man of letters of whom the present generation probably knows very little —if, indeed, it knows anything at all. This was Thomas Miller, whom the printers' readers were fond of calling "the basket-weaving poet." He had been indeed bred to the humble but useful trade of basket-making; and had, early in life, come up to London from the country with a good deal of poetry, but a very few pence, in his pocket. Some notice was taken of him at the outset by society and by the critical journals. He was a genius of the Bloomfield and Kirk White order, and wrote delightfully about rural life. When I knew him he was about forty. I liked his prose better than his poetry. In particular he was the author of a most vigorous and picturesque novel called "Gideon Giles the Roper;" and a modern playwright might do worse than disinter this romance from the shelves of the British Museum Library for dramatising purposes. "Gideon Giles" would exactly suit the stage of the Adelphi.

Of another series of brief essays, or rather, long paragraphs, I bitterly regret the total disappearance; the collection was called "A Hundred Different Faults of a Hundred Different Actors," and to these were added

another century of defects under which as many actresses were supposed to be labouring. Rare examples of impudent audacity, these juvenile sallies in criticism must have been. I was not, however, devoid of considerable experience in things theatrical; inasmuch, as I have said more than once, my early boyhood brought me in constant communication with the world behind the scenes; and as editor of *Chat* I had the run of all the playhouses in London. Theatrical stalls were very rarely met with in those days; and I was quite content to get a place in the front row of the pit or in the upper boxes. I went to the play, I suppose, four nights out of six; and on "the good old times" principle, it seems to me that the plays I witnessed were much more worth seeing than those with which we are at present favoured. I saw Macready in *Lear*, in *Werner*, in *Macbeth*, and in *Hamlet*. At the Surrey Theatre I saw a remarkable negro tragedian by the name of Ira Aldridge, who made his appearance at the transpontine house in the *rôle* of Zanga in *The Revenge*. He had been educated as a minister of religion; but happening in his youth to stray into a playhouse, the performance so dazzled and bewitched him that he resolved, at all hazards, to adopt the stage as his profession; and having studied the part of Rollo in the play of *Pizarro*, he made his appearance in that character at a private theatre. His friends, however, determined that he should be a clergyman. He was sent to a theological college at New York and afterwards to the University of Glasgow; but in the end he became a professional artist and enacted with much

success such parts as Othello; Gambia, in *The Slave;* and Oroonoko.

Then I remember that highly talented tragic actress Mrs. Warner, who, in 1844, had undertaken, in conjunction with Messrs. Phelps and Greenwood, the management of Sadler's Wells Theatre. Naturally I never beheld Mrs. Siddons; but Mrs. Warner was the best Constance in *King John* and the best Gertrude in *Hamlet* that ever I saw. She was a lady of the most spotless private character; and in her last illness—a long and lingering one—Her Majesty the Queen sent one of the Royal carriages daily to her residence, that she might enjoy the advantages of an airing. To this period also belong my reminiscences of that thoroughly capable tragedian and comedian Samuel Phelps, whom I much preferred in comedy. His Falstaff was a splendid creation; and even finer to my mind was his amazingly subtle impersonation of Sir Pertinax McSycophant. There was a Mrs. Cora Mowatt, too, at the old Olympic — an American actress who was very good as Julia in the *Hunchback;* and a capable Irish comedian named Hudson, who nearly equalled Tyrone Power in the part of Rory O'More. Mrs. Ternan, Mrs. Fitz-William, Mrs. H. Marston; Mr. Tom Mead, Miss Glyn, Mrs. Winstanley, Miss Cooper, Mr. H. L. Davenport (another American actor and an excellent Benedick); Miss Julia St. George—a handsome and most sympathetic Ariel in the *Tempest*—Mr. Davidge, who made a great hit in Malvolio; Mr. George Bennett, a respectable

Henry VIII., likewise belong to the period of which I am speaking; and I have also an uncertain recollection of seeing Falconbridge in *King John* played by a Mr. Henry Betty.

I say uncertain because I have never been able to avoid mixing up the elder Betty—Master Betty, the "Young Roscius" of the early years of the century—with his son. The Bettys, *père et fils*, were frequent visitors at the *Chat* office; and Betty, the father, was, if my recollection serves me, a pippin-faced old gentleman who wore a "spencer," that is to say, a single-breasted jacket over a tail-coat. The ludicrous derivation of the name of this garment is that a certain Lord Spencer, dining alone, went to sleep after too copiously partaking of old port; and slumbering too close to the fire, his coat was set alight and the tails were burnt off, when a footman timeously came to rescue his noble master from his peril. Lord Spencer was rather tickled by the incident than otherwise, and thenceforth wore a tailless jacket over his ordinary body coat. The "Draper's Dictionary," by the way, says that the short jacket formerly worn both by ladies and gentlemen was named after a Lord Spencer, who, meeting with an accident in hunting by which his coat tails were torn off, afterwards made the abbreviated garment fashionable; but I prefer the port wine version.

One more incident of my experience as a dramatic critic while editor of *Chat* I recall with a smile. Some time in 1848 or 1849, the little Strand Theatre was under the management of William Farren the Elder.

He was by no means insensible to his own histrionic capacity; and it was related of him that he one day told his company that, having that morning visited the long since defunct Hungerford Market, a fishmonger had importuned him to purchase a particular fish, adding that it was the only cock salmon in the market. "And I," continued the impersonator of Sir Peter Teazle and Grandfather Whitehead, "am the only cock salmon on the stage." Mr. Farren and the Editor of *Chat* had a slight misunderstanding with regard to some criticism which I had indited touching one of his performances; and he consequently stopped my free admission to the Strand Theatre. Forthwith did I come out with a stinging thirty lines of invective, headed "the egregious old Cock Salmon again." The cholera was rife at the time; and the metropolitan churchyards were being successively closed by the order of the then Board of Health. Promptly did I insert in *Chat* another paragraph, headed with the Royal Arms, in which it was set forth that the Metropolitan Board of Health had ordered, for sanitary reasons, the immediate closure of the Strand Theatre, and the removal of all cock salmon from the precincts thereof.

O vanity of youth untoward. Ever spleeny, ever froward! Mr. William Farren the Elder would have been altogether justified in bringing an action against me, or having me up to Bow Street for libel; but instead of taking such hostile proceedings, he sent his acting manager with a friendly message to me at the *Chat* office; and my free admittance to the Strand

Theatre was renewed. I hastened to return the compliment by writing a neat little article, in which I pointed out that Mr. William Farren far surpassed Dowton, and was the equal of Potier and Brunet.

I have already hinted that Mr. Frederick Marriott, the proprietor of *Chat*, was not troubled with a plethora of capital. He had been, however, once upon a time a somewhat wealthy man as a well-known paper maker; but in middle age he gave signs of a propensity that led him to launch into newspaper speculation, the results of which were generally disastrous. He had had something to do with the *Illustrated News* in its early days. He had had something to do with the *Morning Chronicle;* and about 1842 or '43 he had founded a truly original little weekly periodical with the lugubrious title of *The Death Warrant.* The office of this ominous periodical was in the Strand; and the window-blinds were of black wire gauze, plentifully adorned with Death's heads and cross-bones. The paper itself had a broad black border, and images of mortality were plentifully scattered through its columns; the letterpress being chiefly devoted to narratives of bygone murders, and descriptions of peculiarly atrocious tortures and punishments. The *Death Warrant* was not a success; and after a few weeks the versatile Mr. Marriott changed the title of his paper into *The Guide to Life.* This certainly more cheerful publication likewise failed to obtain a remunerative circulation, and Mr. Marriott had to seek for other channels favourable to the exercise of his undeniable

facility of invention and his unconquerable energy. Among other ventures he started a large illustrated journal called *The Railway Bell;* and by agreement with his opposite neighbour in the Strand, he had an immense canvas placard stretching right across the street bearing the device of a gigantic bell, and the words "The Railway Bell is now ringing;" but the bell, loudly as it was pealed, failed to ring pieces of gold and pieces of silver into Mr. Marriott's till; and when he founded *Chat* I am afraid that, financially speaking, he was very nearly on his last legs. At all events, when I had been his editor for about six months, I found that there was a considerable difficulty in obtaining my weekly salary: the proceeds of the circulation and advertisements being removed *en bloc* to the proprietor's residence in Paddington; and at length Mr. Marriott went away, for strictly business reasons, to the State of California, U.S.A.

There was a gold fever existing in London almost as acute as that which three years afterwards set in with regard to the Australian diggings; and there was even a talk of gold having been discovered in Texas. "Gone to Texas" was an inscription which you frequently saw chalked up on the shutters of an empty house; and I remember seeing such a *grafitto* chalked on the shop front of a clothier—I should say of Hebrew extraction—in Newcastle Street, Strand, nearly opposite the *Chat* office. This clothier had a very pretty black-eyed daughter, who accompanied him in his voyage across the Atlantic; and, unless I gravely err, this

comely maiden with the swimming eyes and the sable tresses was subsequently known to dramatic fame as Miss Ada Isaacs Menken, whose performance of Mazeppa made her for a while a Queen of the hour, and whose intellectual gifts gained for her the friendship of Alexandre Dumas the Elder, of Algernon Charles Swinburne, and of Charles Dickens, to the last of whom she dedicated a little book of poems, entitled "Infelicia." She was really a very clever, witty, and kind-hearted little woman, but with a weakness for marrying without having previously ascertained that her former husbands were defunct. I have a portrait of her, sitting side by side with the great author of the "Three Musketeers." The weather was apparently sultry when the *carte de visite* was taken, for Alexandre Dumas is in his shirt-sleeves, and to all appearance is perspiring copiously.

I may also mention that about this time I made the acquaintance, at a little cigar shop, under the pillars, in Norreys Street, Regent Street, of an extremely handsome lady, originally the wife of a solicitor, but who had been known in London and Paris as a ballet-dancer under the name of Lola Montes. When I knew her she had just escaped from Munich, where she had been too notorious as Countess of Landsfeld. She had obtained, for a time, complete mastery over old King Ludwig of Bavaria; and something like a revolution had been necessary to induce her to quit the Bavarian capital. Some time after her return to England she married a gentleman, who was a son of a Proctor

in Doctors' Commons; but some legal difficulties arose in connection with her having another spouse alive, who had been a lieutenant in the Indian Army. After these difficulties had been settled, Lola Montes Landsfeld faded away, so far as England was concerned, into the Infinities; but, many years afterwards, I heard of her at San Francisco, as having led a somewhat adventurous life in the Golden City. Ultimately she went North, and fell upon evil days; but she gained the Christian sympathy of a kind American lady, who succoured her in her utmost need; and she made, I believe, a most edifying end of a stormy career. During my brief acquaintance with her she proposed that I should write her Life; starting with the assumption that she was a daughter of the famous Spanish *matador* Montes. It was a hallucination which, curiously enough, was afterwards, to a certain extent, shared by Ada Isaacs Menken, who had the idea that her real name was Dolores, and that her father had been distinguished in the Iberian bull-ring. The legal difficulties, however, connected with Lola Montes Landsfeld's marriage to the son of the Proctor, prevented the scheme of my writing her biography being carried out.

I must relate as shortly as I can another incident connected with a projected biography of another very noted personage. In 1849, a young friend of mine, an artist, had a sister, who was a dancer of some standing, and between whom and Duke Charles of Brunswick there existed rather intimate relations. The banished Duke

lived in a large house in the New Road, which mansion had formerly been the property of the senior partner in a well-known blacking manufactory; and to this house my youthful friend, the artist, was frequently permitted to repair, to visit his sister. He told me one day that the Duke was writing his Life, and that he wanted some one to illustrate it. I had resumed, after a considerable surcease, the practice of etching; and I gladly accepted the ducal commission to execute a given number of plates, at the rate of ten pounds each. A portion of the manuscript was sent to me, and I etched, first, an elaborate view of the ducal palace at Brunswick, and next, the scene of a riot in the theatre, caused by a somewhat unseemly ballet which the Duke had insisted should be given there. I was half through the third plate, which represented a tumultuous mob setting fire to the Schloss, when Duke Charles's friend, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, being firmly installed as President of the French Republic, it occurred to his Serene Highness to visit, by means of a balloon, the fair land of France. The Prince President was rather ashamed of his quondam friend; and, throughout the duration of the Second Empire, persistently snubbed him. Still I have been positively assured by my friend the artist that but for the considerable pecuniary assistance rendered by the amazingly wealthy Duke to the Prince, Louis Napoleon would never have been able to defray the expenses of his election to the Presidency.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNALISTS OF THE PAST.

Thomas Littleton Holt and his Ventures—Beards and Moustaches—The Railway Mania—The *Iron Times*—Wallowing in Gold—The Crash—Pierce Egan the Elder and his Recollections.

It was during my connection with *Chat* that I first made the acquaintance of Mr. Thomas Littleton Holt, one of the most curious types—if, indeed, he was not a unique one—of the journalism of the past. The publications, daily, weekly, and monthly, founded and edited by Holt could be reckoned by the score; although their existence rarely extended beyond a few months, and was in many cases limited to a few weeks. I may be pardoned for a seeming paradox, which I hope is susceptible of explanation, when I say that Thomas Littleton Holt was a Bohemian; and yet, to a very great extent, the very reverse of a man with Bohemian tendencies. In the first place, he had married early a lady of good family, and of considerable personal charms; he was a devoted husband, and the most affectionate of fathers; and he was neither a gambler, nor a profligate, nor a spendthrift, and always did his best to pay his way; whereas the literary Bohemian of the period was, in most cases, an equivocal person from the ethical point of view. Holt came of an old and good family, and could, I believe, justify his claim to descent from the

famous Chief Justice of the same surname. He had been educated at St. Paul's School, and at Cambridge, at which university, however, I do not think that he ever graduated. His father, I have heard, was a clergyman, if not a Doctor of Divinity, and was the proprietor of a respectable weekly newspaper, known as *Old Bell's Messenger*.

In what manner, then, you may ask, did Mr. Thomas Littleton Holt make outward and visible sign of his Bohemianism? His citizenship of Prague was due to the circumstance that he had an inveterate propensity for starting newspapers, magazines, and weekly periodicals: usually without the requisite capital for carrying out those publications to a successful issue. As a journalist, he wrote fairly well; but if he had ever been a working newspaper man, content to earn his livelihood as a critic, or a reviewer, or a writer of leading articles, or even as a writer of descriptive paragraphs, his chances of regular employment would, I fear, have been sadly imperilled by the execrable calligraphy with which he was afflicted. I am not aware that he had any poetry in his soul; and I never heard that he had written any novels or tales, long or short. He may have taken, now and again, a trip to Paris, but I doubt if he had ever travelled five hundred miles away from Fleet Street. He was an excellent classical scholar, a good mathematician, and he had a copious, if not a profound, acquaintance with English literature, history, and theology. When I knew him in 1848 he was, I should say, about forty years of

age, and could just remember the Battle of Waterloo. He had also, as a boy, visited Leigh Hunt while the poet was imprisoned in Horsemonger Lane gaol. He was a rare humorist, and, to some extent, a wit; very shrewd and discriminative as an editor; but his forte lay in starting more and more magazines and periodicals.

Soon after he left the university, he had been a partner in divers unlucky journalistic enterprises of Gilbert Abbot à Beckett, and he had also had more or less intimate business relations with Henry Mayhew. Then he went into affairs on his own account as a creator of periodicals. Of how many of these publications he saw the birth and death, during my knowledge of him, I am utterly unable to say; but I stumbled recently on several volumes of a weekly journal, of which he was proprietor and editor, called *Holt's Magazine,* which was published some time in the 'thirties. Personally, he was a tall, handsome man, remarkable for his flowing hirsute adornments, at a period when Mr. Muntz, one of the Members for Birmingham, and Colonel Sibthorp, one of the representatives for Lincoln in Parliament, were nearly the only Englishmen of note, not being military men, who wore either beards or moustaches.

In the majority of instances Fate frowned very despitefully on Holt's journalistic ventures; but now and again there was a bright rift in the clouds which commercially gathered about his head, and in the year of the railway mania, 1845, he was favoured during some months with an uninterrupted blaze of

golden sunshine. He applied for some shares in one of the innumerable railway companies which were projected, and, in accordance with the loose practice then common, sold, without having paid a halfpenny of deposit, his letter of allotment at a handsome premium. Forthwith he started a daily newspaper, called the *Iron Times*, which at once became a prodigious financial success. Its columns, day after day for many weeks, were inundated with advertisements of newly projected lines, the promoters of which rarely paid for their advertisements in cash, but were always ready to hand over fully paid-up shares in exchange for the public announcements of their schemes.

These shares, in the then Bedlamite condition of the railway stock-market, could immediately be realised; and Holt did realise them, to the extent of perhaps twenty thousand pounds. Had he realised them all, he might, at the beginning of November, 1845, have been the possessor of perhaps a hundred-and-fifty thousand pounds; but he held his hand in the hope that his securities would rise higher and higher in value. While the mania lasted, however, he and his family lived in the most gorgeous of clover; or rather, in a field teeming with golden grain; he spurned the rail—that rail which was bringing so much auriferous grist to his mill—and travelled in a barouche, drawn by four horses. The electric telegraph was not very widely used in those days; but it was utilised by the editor and proprietor of the *Iron Times* to communicate his expensive wishes to the proprietors of

the hotels on his route. I remember one of his despatches, addressed to "The Hen and Chickens," Birmingham: "Arrive at midnight. Broiled fowl and mushrooms for eight. Sneed's claret. Moet and Chandon magnums. Brandy-and-water in relays. A piano.—Holt, *Iron Times*."

With all his eccentricities, T. Littleton Holt was a perfectly truthful man; and I see no reason to question the accuracy of a story which he once told me, of having received from the sale of some shares a thousand pounds sterling, which he took care to draw in gold. He repaired to an hotel at the West End, emptied the bags of sovereigns into the bed, and went to sleep literally in the sands of Pactolus. There was nothing so very much out of the way in this revelling in a golden bath. I have related how Paganini the violinist washed his hands, so to speak, in sovereigns; and I have heard that when Frédéric Soulié, the French novelist, received from his publisher ten thousand francs, in *louis d'or*, for the first volume of the "Mémoires du Diable," he poured the glittering treasure into a foot-bath and enjoyed that exceptional *bain de pieds* for at least half an hour, smoking meanwhile the biggest of Havanas.

But, alas! in poor Holt's case, a crash came in the Railway Share Market. The pitiless figures of Mr. Spackman, the accountant, were published, as I have said elsewhere, in *The Times*. It was shown that there was scarcely enough money in all England to build the projected railways; and a financial collapse, surpassing

the crisis of 1825, and almost equalling the horrible ruin and disaster caused by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, came down like a thunder-cloud on Capel Court. Thomas Littleton Holt awoke one morning, like many other speculators of the period, to find himself a ruined man: the proprietor, it is true, of a vast number of shares, nominally worth ever so many thousand pounds, but which, as soon as Mr. Spackman's statistics were published, represented only so much waste-paper.

He also remained the proprietor of the *Iron Times*, the goodwill of which had come not to be worth much more than twopence-halfpenny; and the undaunted Thomas Littleton Holt was left, like Marius among the ruins of Carthage; the *débris* comprising innumerable prospectuses, letters of allotment, and scrip, certificates, bursten boilers, skeleton carriages, wrecked luggage-vans, broken buffers, and dim streaks of rust where there had once been promises of double lines of rails. As I have said, he was always starting new publications; and the wonder of it was that he was rarely unsuccessful in finding printers and paper makers to help him in running the first few numbers of his new enterprise. "These good people," he was accustomed to say, "have, I suppose, lost a good many thousands by me. Still, I think that I may say, with modest self-consciousness, that Thomas Littleton Holt has been the direct means of putting more money into the pockets of the compositors of London than any other journalist of the period."

Holt may possibly turn up again from time to time in the course of these Memoirs; but ere I temporarily dismiss him, I may mention that through him I became acquainted with a man of letters whom I looked upon, I should say, with justice, as a highly curious relic of the sporting days of the Regency. This was Pierce Egan the Elder, the author of "Life in London," of "The Life of an Actor," of "Boxiana," the editor of "Jon Bee's Slang Dictionary," and of a host of pugilistic and horsey books and periodicals, once amazingly popular, but the majority of which have long been completely forgotten. I never had any appreciable success as the proprietor of any periodical whatsoever; still I began that line of business very early, and in 1849 I was associated with Holt in the conduct of some little periodical, of the name and purport of which I am at present wholly oblivious. I know, however, that it was illustrated, and that the illustrations were from my own pencil. Atrociously bad those drawings must have been, seeing that we could scarcely afford to pay so much as a living wage to the engravers who reproduced my designs on wood, and most of the drawings were rather hewn, or dug out of the block, than engraved.

We had agreed that Pierce Egan should write a column of sporting matter for us; and he made an appointment to meet us in the coffee-room of a shady old-fashioned tavern somewhere in Rupert Street, Haymarket. Pierce had long since fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, and was well-stricken in the vale of years; in fact, he was seventy-seven when I saw him, and the

year of my meeting with him was the last in his life. "A little wearish old man, somewhat melancholy by nature, averse to company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness." Such a one was Democritus, as Burton, in "The Anatomy of Melancholy," described the philosopher of Abdera, from the word-picture left by Hippocrates. Pierce Egan, as I remember him, had a rather quavering voice, and a shrinking, shuffling manner, as though the poor old gentleman had found the burden of his life a great misery to him, and was yearning to shake it off. I had drunk deep of his books from my earliest boyhood. I had copied, in pen-and-ink, scores of the etchings made by George and Robert Cruikshank for the illustration of "Life in London," and I could not help asking myself, mentally, and with mournful dismay, whether this withered patriarch could be the renowned Pierce Egan, whose proficiency in slang had been praised in *Blackwood's Magazine*, who had been the life and soul of several sporting "free-and-easies," and a referee at a hundred prize fights.

Still, you will remember that which Burton says of the occasional relaxation of Democritus:—"Howsoever it was, there he lived at last in a garden in the suburbs, wholly betaking himself to his studies and a private life, saving that sometimes he would walk down to the haven, and laugh heartily at such variety of ridiculous objects which there he saw." So it was with Pierce Egan the Elder. I forget whether he smoked; but Holt and I soon managed to wreathe his old head with

garlands of cerulean vapour, not from cigars, if you please, but from good honest "yards of clay," of the Broseley pattern; and then, after a few glasses of rum punch, the cockles of Pierce's heart were warmed; the old man became eloquent; he began to talk of Tom Spring, and Tom Belcher, and Bob Gregson, and other famous gladiators of the bygone; he told us of Jack Mitton and of Gully, the pugilist, who retired from the prize ring to become eventually a Member of Parliament. He descanted on the cock-fighting, the bull-baiting, the badger-drawing, the ratting, and the dog-and-duck fighting he had seen in the brave days of old; he had known Shaw the Lifeguardsman, he had played billiards with Jack Thurtell; he was the abstract and chronicle of the manners of an age which had vanished, and which, it is most devoutly to be hoped, will never repeat itself on this sublunary sphere again. It was not an intellectual evening, and from the point of view of the higher morality, not a very edifying one; still, altogether, the night was one of the most entertaining that I ever passed. Pierce Egan the Younger I afterwards knew very well; he was a copious writer of fiction in the *London Journal:* his masterpiece being a romance entitled "The Poor Girl;" and he died a prosperous gentleman.

CHAPTER XX.

POVERTY.

The School in which Johnson Learned Compassion—A Slave to the Pipe—Vicarious Smoking—Selling a Quack Medicine—A Windfall—In Paris Again—My First Book of Pictures: "Hail, Rain, Steam, and Speed."

It is perhaps almost unnecessary to state that in these, the days of my earliest editorship, when I was eking out my small journalistic income by odd guineas and half-guineas—yea, and sometimes the humble, but welcome, five shillings — by making drawings on wood or in water-colours, I was very, very poor. Now I do not call him poor who has enough of anything, be it truffles and chambertin, or tripe and onions, or bread and cheese. "We can be good and happy without socks," the erratic philosopher, "Billy Barlow," was made to say: but Barlow had never felt the want of socks. Had he worn them they might have impeded the freedom of his gait and the independence of his port. Barlow was a nomad, a quagga kind of man, restless, incult, but according to his lights and his wants, happy. Because pretty little Pocahontas had never known the luxury of a chemise, she was not less Princess of Virginia. To be very poor is, I grant, sometimes to be very miserable, and to be extremely miserable for a time is, I hold, a most beneficial mental and bodily state for any man to be

in. To have lacked bread and raiment, and a bed now and then in the course of your career, if you have a man's heart in you, and not that of a beast, is to make you, if you attain prosperity, tolerant and charitable, and possibly humble, modest, and grateful. For all your fine horses and carriages, and money in the Funds, you may be a beggar again some day.

The American millionaires have a proverb that there is only one generation between shirt-sleeves and shirt-sleeves. This should be your incentive to modesty. Spurn not that mendicant; set him not down sternly as a vagrant or an impostor; you were yourself quite innocent of fraud when you were needy and sought relief. There should be your incentive to charity. Be not angry with the poor devil who worries you with begging letters. You really *were* expecting a remittance when you wrote to Dives, imploring the favour of that small loan; you *did* intend to repay him with heartfelt thanks; you *had* pawned your coat; you had *not* tasted food for two days, while you waited, sick at heart, at the foot of his staircase for an answer. Now, how is a man fully to understand poverty, and to appreciate want and to pity necessity, if he have not been himself one of the *bisognosi*, if he have not himself gone through the slow grinding mill of desperate penury?

Scarcely ever have there been two more charitable men than Oliver Goldsmith and Samuel Johnson; and as seldom have there been, in their earlier days, two needier ones. 'Twas the remembrance of the time when he lived among the beggars in Axe Lane,

when he pledged the suit of clothes which the publisher had obtained for him on credit; when he left my Lord Bishop, who was so kind as to pay him a visit in Green Arbour Court, to lend the Irishwoman below a slop-basin full of coals, that opened Oliver's hand when he came to wear silk stockings and a coat of Tyrian dye; that moved him to enrol that band of rugged pensioners who made a more dignified show about his doors when he lived in the Temple than all the Beefeaters and all the gentlemen-pensioners could make at the obsequies of a king. It was the mindfulness of hunger and nakedness and cold, of nights passed with Savage, wandering up and down the cruel streets, or crouching upon pavements; it was the recollection of the sponging house, and the twopenny ordinary—it was the memory of the day when the publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine* asked him to dinner, but he was fain to devour his victuals behind a screen, because, in his ragged horseman's coat, he was not thought fit to sit at meat with Mr. Cave's genteel company—that stirred the grand heart of Johnson to infinite tenderness and compassion; that bade him open his house and purse to the fractious blind woman and the silly, troublesome apothecary; that prompted him to take upon his strong shoulders the fainting wanton whom he found perishing on the pavement in the night, and give her food and shelter in his home.

Did you ever see Murillo's picture of "San Juan de Dios?" If you have not an engraving, a few words of description may serve your turn. The painting

is at Seville, in the Church of La Caridad—the libertine Don Juan's own church. The saint has found a beggar perishing in the gutter, as Johnson found the wanton. Forthwith he hoists Lazarus on his back. But the holy man is old and feeble, and he stumbles and staggers, and is like to fall beneath the load; when an Angel comes out of the darkness of the night—an Angel with shining face and wings—and cheers him and props his arm and guides his footsteps in with his charge to the 'spital. When I first looked on this picture I thought at once of Dr. Johnson tottering along Fleet Street with the poor worn-out derelict of womanhood on his back.

Yes; poverty was anguish, and of the bitterest. It was vastly fine for Béranger to sing, "*Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans.*" But how is it when at twenty years even the garret is not attainable; or having one, you are locked out by the landlady for not paying the rent? Béranger talks of his Lisette; of his credit at Madame Grégoire's *cabaret;* of his pawning his watch to defray the cost of a carouse. How is it when you have no Lisette, no wine-shop keeper to trust you, no watch to pawn? Béranger had a trade, he was a compositor; and an industrious working man need never starve. In the days of which I speak I could do nothing which could secure me a regular livelihood. I could not draw, nor engrave, nor paint, nor write well enough—although I dabbled in all those crafts—to be received as a skilful journeyman in any workshop. It was not until I was twenty-three that I scraped

together enough money to deliberately apprentice myself to an engraver on steel and copper, in order that if the worst came to the worst, I might be able to earn forty or fifty shillings a week by engraving visiting-cards or bill-heads for tradesmen.

I know that I have often turned half sick when I went into a tavern for half-a-pint of porter, to see a swaggering customer throw down a sovereign and rattle in his hand the shining change which the barmaid handed him. I had early fallen a slave to tobacco—the great consoler, the great afflicter, the merciless usurer, who exacts higher interest every time he renews the bill, and at last demands his capital and sells you up, and leaves you bankrupt in nerve and brain. I know that when I have not had the means of purchasing a solitary "screw" of birds-eye, and have probed all my short pipes in the fruitless hope of finding in some forgotten bowl a remnant of "mundungus," I have taken a wretched pleasure in walking in the street behind a gentleman who was smoking a good cigar; and the aroma of his Havana wafted me into a kind of sensuous ecstasy, which was half gratification and half despair.

I know that I have sauntered about Clubland, have wandered up and down Pall Mall and Waterloo Place and St. James's Street, gazing on summer afternoons and evenings through the open windows of the great gas-lit palaces, and wondering whether the stout, grey-headed gentlemen whom I saw enthroned before the snowy-white damask, plying their

knives and forks, or sipping their wine or lounging behind newspapers, belonged to a superior race of mortals—whether they walked and talked like other folks. There is a portrait of a general officer in full uniform visible from the street in one of the saloons of the Senior United Service; and there are some red-backed chairs which you can espy through the windows of the Travellers', which affect me strangely to this day. On the whole, although I have known a good many extremely poor men and women who were not only resigned but cheerful when the icy hand of poverty was pressing most piteously upon them, I am inclined to think that, in the main, indigence and misery are convertible terms.

As regards my conductorship of *Chat*, my total earnings as editor and contributor did not generally exceed from eighteen to twenty-two shillings a week. When, by agreement with Mr. Marriott's legal representatives in London, I became part proprietor of the little journal, I was worse off than when I was editor. In the first case I received a salary—not much, but still sufficient to keep body and soul together. In the last case I was supposed to participate in the profits. There were no net profits, so we were constrained to appropriate the gross proceeds. Unfortunately, my co-proprietors were as poverty-stricken as I was; and on more than one occasion we were under the unpleasant necessity of fighting for the small change in the till. About this time also, having always had a taste for speculation, I was induced to add to the

publishing business the sale of a new patent American nostrum called "The Shaking Quaker's Herbal Pill." I drew on wood a preposterous cartoon of the Shakers dancing in their Meeting House; the Quakers in one battalion, the Quakeresses in another—facing each other and capering in the most animated manner. I do not think that my erratic pencil had ever drawn so many hideous countenances and so many grotesque attitudes as I portrayed on that block. Infatuated youth! I ought to have made the male Shakers plump, complacent and smug, and the female ones comely and demure. Perhaps the ugliness of the portraits which I had drawn militated against the popularity of the pills: at all events they did not sell; I am sure I do not know why, for I took several boxes of Shaking Quakers myself, and they never did me any harm. I withdrew from the entire concern at last, quite disgusted with literature, journalism, and pills, and I did not write a line for the press for three whole years.

It had not been a jovial time. It had rarely been even an amusing one. During three-fourths of it I was inexpressibly wretched. When I am in town and pass the corner of Holywell Street, I regard the bookseller's shop that now occupies the site of the office of *Chat*, not with fond remembrance, not with a soft and mellowed interest, but with a kind of cold shuddering aversion, as a place where I suffered long and bitterly. The lessons which I learned there will not, I trust, be forgotten; and it is even possible that I learnt there many lessons of

self-discipline and of resignation to sorrow and disappointment, which have been useful to me in after-life; but any solace which I may feel from looking back on scenes of misery, arises not from the knowledge that they were tempered by the joyousness and carelessness of youth, but by the consciousness that I am better off now, and by the hope that I shall not get into such a scrape again.

My share in the copyright and goodwill of *Chat* was purchased by my co-proprietors for the sum of ten pounds, which, at the period, seemed to me a mint of money. I must have been also favoured by another windfall at the time. Yes; I know whence it came. On my twenty-first birthday I came into possession of a legacy of twenty pounds, bequeathed to me by my Aunt Sophia, who had departed this life about twelve years before. Thus comparatively affluent, as I felt myself to be, I treated myself to a long-meditated trip to Paris, which gay city I had not set eyes upon for nearly ten years. Louis Philippe, having been dethroned, was living in dignified seclusion at Claremont. Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was President of the Republic, which seemed to me to be getting on about as badly as a Republic under any political or social circumstances could. The President was over head and ears in debt, and was the object of at least twenty intrigues, plots, and conspiracies on the part of as many political factions. The Trees of Liberty which had been planted with such profusion on the boulevards and in other public places in the

capital after February were rapidly disappearing; they were, probably, nocturnally uprooted by the police. The public buildings still bore on their façades the proud proclamation "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité!" but in general society this political trinity was usually contemptuously alluded to as *les trois blagues.*

In a *revue* or topical extravaganza at the Vaudeville Theatre, one of the lady characters, on reference being incidentally made to February, 1848, archly replied, "*C'était alors que la France avait la rougeole*"—the measles—and the *mot* was received with shouts of applause by nine-tenths of the audience. The great majority of the people of Paris seemed to be heartily sick of the Republic and of all that was hers. The horrible slaughter which had taken place in the streets in the insurrection of June, 1848, had terrified and disgusted the frivolous, pleasure-loving Parisians. Nobody knew what was to come next; and all eyes were turned half in hope and half in fear to the enigmatical gentleman at the Élysée. Paris seemed to me dishevelled, shabby, and unkempt. The old hotels had degenerated; the splendid caravansaries of the Imperial *régime* were scarcely as yet dreamed of. There was a lack of good new pieces at the theatres; and on the whole, Paris seemed to me to be vastly different from, and as vastly inferior in the way of vivacity and gaiety to, the Lutetia which I had known and loved as a schoolboy.

I only stayed a few days in the French capital, and, having spent nearly all the balance of my

wealth by taking a ticket in a lottery, in which the chief prize was a huge nugget of Australian gold, and in which, of course, I drew a blank, I returned to London to resume that old, old enterprise of mine of tracking the wily five-pound note and the equally cautious sovereign to their lair. This time I thought that I would try art. I could draw passably well on stone; and in 1850 I produced my first "work"—I mean, a little book filled with illustrations from my own pencil. It was a kind of comic guide-book for Continental tourists, and was called "Hail, Rain, Steam, and Speed," a title evidently borrowed from that of Turner's extraordinary picture of a train on the Great Western Railway rushing along a viaduct in the midst of a blinding storm of rain. The book was published by the firm of Ackermann, in the Strand: a house to which during several years I was indebted for much remunerative employment. Of course I was very proud of having brought forth this tiny morsel of a volume, the price of which was either half-a-crown or a shilling, and I hastened to send a copy to my mother, who was on a visit to the Marchioness of Abercorn, at Baron's Court, Ireland.

It was the practice of my parent to make an annual autumnal tour, half friendly and half professional, staying at the country houses of great ladies who had been her pupils of old, and whose daughters were growing up. Among these country seats I remember in particular that of the Marchioness, afterwards

Duchess, of Abercorn, and vice-queen of Ireland; and the residences of the Marchioness of Donegal and of Lady Garvagh; and it was with pride and gratitude that I learned from my mother that my little "Hail, Rain, Steam, and Speed" had been laid on the drawing-room table at Baron's Court, and had been honoured by the approval of the noble family and guests there. From that little circumstance arose the most pleasant of associations, during a long and varied career, with the noble house of Hamilton, whose members have never ceased to claim a kindly, unvested interest in the well-being of G. A. S. Both as Marquis and Marchioness of Hamilton, and as Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, the present heads of the house have always been my friends, and the amicable feelings they have shown to me have been shared by many others of their family.

CHAPTER XXI.

"NO POPERY" AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

"Red-Hot Works of Art"—Cardinal Wiseman—"The Great Exhibition Wot is To Be"—Another Windfall: Making a Fool of Myself—Simpson's Cigar Divan—Costly Pocket-handkerchiefs.

Lord John Russell's famous "Durham Letter," written by the then First Minister of the Crown to the Bishop of Durham—in which epistle the Premier severely censured not only the recent Papal aggression, imputed to Cardinal Wiseman in having published a pastoral letter in which all England was parcelled out into Romish dioceses, but also the proceedings of the Tractarian clergy of the Church of England—brought me another commission from the house of Ackermann. For them I engraved on stone a kind of panorama, folding into book form, with the then attractive title, "No Popery;" and the illustrations were printed in red and black, the first hue having an obvious reference to the Scarlet Lady of Babylon, and the next symbolising the dark machinations of the Ritualists, then styled Puseyites. "No Popery" had an immense sale, but I do not think that I made more than twenty pounds by it. The success, however, of the little pictorial tract brought to the front a large number of humorous artists, among them being the well-known Alfred Forester, whose graphic pseudonym

was "Alfred Crowquill." He executed about a dozen cartoons in water-colours, which I copied in chalk on stone.

They were awfully ominous pictures, threatening Protestant England with the most fearful disasters if the Pope, the Cardinal, and the insidious Puseyites were allowed to have their wicked way. Guy Fawkes, Ignatius Loyola, Torquemada, and all the familiars of the Holy Inquisition figured in these red-hot works of art; and the foreground was heaped high with stakes, scourges, thumbscrews, fetters, racks, and other engines of Papal cruelty. For a considerable number of weeks London and the provinces went stark, staring mad over "Papal Aggression"; and the outcome of the "aggression" was the passing, in the following year, of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, prohibiting, under a penalty of a hundred pounds, the constitution of Romanist bishops of pretended provinces. The Act, which was a sufficiently idiotic one, was never put in force; and twenty years afterwards it was repealed amidst the complete indifference of the public at large. I had the honour to know Cardinal Wiseman, who was a cheery, benignant old gentleman, with a very hearty appetite; and I have lived to see his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan make a radiant appearance at grand social functions in England in a flowing mantle of rose-crimson damask.

But a more important commission than the Ackermann's was now given me. The approaching Great Exhibition of 1851 was filling the minds of

my own countrymen, and, indeed, of most civilised nations to boot, with pleasurable anticipation and excited hope. Paxton's design for a colossal conservatory in Hyde Park had been accepted by the Commissioners for the World's Fair. The illustrated papers abounded with pictures of what the Exhibition was to be like; and I thought that I might as well take Time by the forelock by publishing a series of comic prophesies of the objects and the people who would most probably be exhibited at the great show. The whole work was etched on four large lithographic stones, and bore the rather imbecile title: "The Great Exhibition Wot Is to Be, and how it's all Going to be Done," by "Vates Secundus."

"Vates," by the way, whom I knew very well in the flesh, had nothing to do with classical antiquity; it was a pseudonym of the gentleman who, during many years, was a prophet of that well-known sporting newspaper *Bell's Life in London*. My book comprised many hundreds of farcical figures, all with very large heads and very diminutive bodies. A band of music was led by M. Jullien, the well-known Promenade Concert conductor, who was followed by the choir of St. Paul's and the chorus of Her Majesty's Theatre. The French exhibits included a huge ornamental clock wheeled on a truck by Prince Louis Napoleon; and on the dials the hours were marked by Republicanism, Socialism, Bonapartism, Legitimism, St. Simonianism, Fourrierism, and Orleanism. The hour-hand pointed to Orleanism, the minute-hand

to Bonapartism: a double-barrelled prophecy which not many months afterwards was partially verified. Then M. Adolphe Thiers exhibited himself, bearing on his head the twenty volumes of his "History of the Consulate and the Empire." Guizot posed as an ancient Stoic philosopher; and Alexandre Dumas the Elder dragged his voluminous works on a barrow; while Victor Hugo followed with a model of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris on a salver. Then came a little Paris *gamin* carrying, on a pole surmounted by a weathercock, a harlequin suit of clothes, as one most appropriate for French politicians to wear. Soyer, the cook, brandished a stew-pan in one hand and his "magic stove" in the other; while French tragedy was illustrated by Mademoiselle Rachel as Phèdre; and the French exhibits wound up with a mob of dancing-masters, *pioupious*, Red Republicans, *débardeurs*, and *gendarmes*. In the German section, together with pipes, sausages, *sauerkraut*, and *Kirschwasser*, there was the presentment of the Lord High Admiral of the German fleet and the fleet itself; the admiral wore top-boots, and the fleet was a little cock-boat floating in a washing-tub. Little did I dream in my raw youth that the German navy would in my old age become a gigantic and powerful machine of war. Yet I should say that in 1850 some millions of my fellow-countrymen entertained opinions corresponding with my own touching the prospects of a German navy. A happier hit I managed to make in the Russian section, in which I drew the Emperor Nicholas as a

huge bear, and remarked in the text that Bruin would be divided by a strong barrier from the Ottoman section of the Exhibition, as considerable danger would probably result to the Turkey from close proximity to the Bear.

Italian macaroni and Italian-irons; Spanish Figaros and cachucha dancers; Americans revelling in sherry-cobblers, reposing in rocking-chairs, thrashing their slaves, and brandishing six-chambered pistols; Turks, Jews, and African savages; Scotch bagpipers and Irish bhoys and colleens; the great Duke of Wellington and Sir Charles Napier on horseback; the Widow M'Cormack, with a picture of her cabbage-garden; Joseph Hume with the model of a save-all; Disraeli with eight hats superposed one on the other, as a specimen of a Hebrew Caucasian "gent."; Lord Brougham as Janus; and five hundred other more or less absurd monstrosities made up this farrago of juvenile impertinence—an impertinence, however, to which I devoted many weeks of the hardest of labour—my studio being a well-lighted room on the premises of Messrs. Day and Haghe, the lithographers, of Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who printed my "Great Exhibition" for Messrs. Ackermann.

I had scarcely finished this, to me, important work, for which I received the sumptuous remuneration of one hundred pounds, when I was the victim—yes, all things considered, the victim—of another windfall, to which I have already made passing reference. That

Aunt Sophy who had left me twenty pounds to be paid on my attaining my majority, had bequeathed the life-interest in the rest of her property to her sister, my Aunt Eliza, whom I have before spoken of as Mrs. Crellin. At her death in 1850 the property was divisible among us four nephews and nieces; but my dearest sister Augusta had died of consumption early in 1849; and there were only four nephews left, my brothers Frederick, Charles, Albert, and myself, to share in the modest heritage. Frederick was established as a professor of music at Southampton, and had already given three hostages to Fortune. Albert, after a chequered maritime career between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two, was serving in the Navy of the Honourable East India Company. There fell to each of us a few hundred pounds in cash, and a little house property.

I beg to state once for all that I did not spend any considerable portion of my legacy in riotous living, but at the same time I managed in the course of three months to make a very complete fool of myself. Had I listened to the advice of Thomas Littleton Holt—always wise in counselling others, and usually injudicious in advising himself—I should, after a little preparatory grinding, have gone to the University; since for a young man of my age I knew a great deal. I only wanted a little scholarly discipline and system. I might then have entered myself at one of the Inns of Court, and possibly, being endowed by Nature with what is most vulgarly but still most forcibly called the

"gift of the gab," I might have done very well at the Bar. It was not to be. Most firmly do I believe in Fate. It was my *Kismet*, my destiny, to wander up and down, and to go to and fro in the world, and to make use of the knowledge and the experience which I acquired, as a writer for the press.

For a few weeks my brother Charles and I devoted ourselves to enjoyment pure and simple. We dined at high-class restaurants, went to the Derby in a "one-horse shay," and to Ascot in a hansom cab; we gave bachelor parties at our modest little apartments in a street close to Mornington Crescent, and I smoked sixpenny cigars instead of twopenny ones. In particular did we delight in Saturday to Monday jaunts to fishing hostelries on the Upper Thames, and the back-waters thereof, then a delightfully sequestered and tranquil region. There were no house-boats, and no 'Arries to vex your soul; but there were long sunny tranquil days devoted to fishing, and delightful evenings, in the course of which veteran fresh-water anglers sang songs with choruses about perch and chub, roach and dace, and told the most amazing fibs about the gigantic pike which they alleged that they had caught.

It was the American humorist, Josh Billings, who once professed to vouch for the veracity of a story which he related, by saying that it had been told to him by an auctioneer, and that he never knew an auctioneer tell a lie unless he could get something by it. But the mendacious angler derives no profit whatsoever from his

tarradiddles; he lies because he likes it and his hearers like to hear him lie—at least, they did in those days—and when their turn comes will lie as vigorously as he. Perhaps they are incited to mendacity by the view of the stuffed and varnished fish in glass cases which adorn the walls. Those reminders of bygone piscatorial prowess may be as irresistible a stimulant to their imaginations as the minstrelsy of old Timotheus—not unaided by the flowing bowl—was to Alexander:—

"Soothed by the sound the King grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain;
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride."

I fancy that our pride was checked when the landlord of the "Jolly Anglers" or the "Isaac Walton's Head" appeared on the scene of our revels, and presented the reckoning.

There was a real and ridiculous incident that, during this halcyon period, contributed much to check my youthful pride. I was too young and too obscure to belong to any club, but in lieu thereof I used, when I wished to spend a quiet evening, to repair to Simpson's cigar divan in the Strand, the upper chamber of which was a luxuriously appointed smoking-room containing an excellent library. For the sum of one shilling you had a cup of excellent coffee, and a very good cigar, and you might remain in this *fumoir* and

smoke and read as long as ever you liked. It was a most entertaining and instructive night-resort for clubless young men who were not always ambitious to go on the loose. I had changed my residence to a furnished parlour and bedroom in Buckingham Street, Strand; and in my youthful vanity, being determined, after the manner of Mr. Pepys, to "go like myself," I dressed in somewhat dandified attire, my costume including the then indispensable item of a very large bandana pocket-handkerchief.

It was "the thing" to allow this gorgeous *mouchoir* to protrude to the extent of half-an-inch from your pocket. When you devoted yourself to smoking or reading in a public room, you placed the handkerchief daintily on your knee; and if you liked to take forty winks you threw it negligently over your head. I bought a dozen of these accursed—yes, accursed pocket-handkerchiefs. The ground was a bright buff, with a deep border of crimson. Unfortunately, in those days, people carried their handkerchiefs in the hinder-pockets of their coats; and I have to record the lamentable, the humiliating fact, that in the course of three weeks my pocket was picked of every one of the much-prized bandanas. Some artful *filou* had evidently "spotted me" one evening on my emerging from Simpson's cigar divan, and had followed up his felonious *coups* night after night. But worse remained behind. The bandanas were very expensive articles; the very best cost twelve or fourteen shillings a-piece. Being flush of money, credit was of course forced upon me,

and I did not pay ready-money to the obliging glover, hosier, and purveyor of gentlemen's knick-knacks generally, who supplied me with these pocket-handkerchiefs. The evil days, as you will presently learn, were soon to come upon me, and upon my word, the hosier dunned me for eighteen months for that dozen of silk handkerchiefs.

CHAPTER XXII.

STARTING A MAGAZINE AND BREAKING THE BANK.

The *Conservative Magazine*—The Death of Sir Robert Peel: Police in Mourning—"Pitching into" the Railway King—Fate of the New Venture—"Mr. Hopeful" and his "System"—My Horror of Mountains—First Visit to Brussels—At Aix-la-Chapelle—Mr. Hopeful Changes his System: The Result—A New Comic Panorama of the Great Exhibition—Falling in Love—Doing Justice to a High-Tea—Reminiscences of Brougham.

It occurred to me about the end of the summer of 1850 that to live on one's capital, especially when that capital was limited in amount, was on the whole very bad policy; and after considerable deliberation, I made up my mind to turn to substantially profitable account the few hundred pounds which yet remained to me. My brief career as part proprietor of a weekly periodical had certainly not been of a nature to offer any bright encouragement as to my chances of success in other journalistic adventures. But a passing breeze of literary ambition fanned my normally rather sluggish nature; and I resolved to start a monthly magazine at the patrician price of half-a-crown. Why I should have called my projected bantling the *Conservative Magazine* I am utterly unable to explain. Although from my early boyhood I had been an earnest student of every newspaper of which I could possibly get hold, I had not, at the age of twenty-two, written one single line on any question of English politics whatsoever; and

I believe that, fundamentally, I was utterly indifferent as to whether the great Sir Robert Peel or Lord John Russell was in office. I had caricatured both those statesmen and other public men, impartially, for some years; but I had quite an open mind as to the merits or demerits of Free Trade, or the proposal for disestablishing the Irish Church.

On the whole I am inclined at this time of day to conclude that my crude, imperfect, and transitory tendency to sympathise with Conservatism was inspired by the real sorrow which I, and I am sure many millions of Englishmen, felt at the death of Sir Robert Peel himself. On the 29th of June, 1850, Sir Robert was thrown from his horse on Constitution Hill, fracturing one of his ribs, the point of which penetrated his lung; and after lingering in great agony for some days, he died at his house in Whitehall Gardens on July 4th, in the sixty-third year of his age. His death was deplored throughout the Empire. A Tory to the backbone in many respects, he had twice sacrificed the principles in which he had been nurtured, and yielded to that which he wisely recognised as the inevitable. The high Tories of whom he had once been the pride and glory, as was also William Ewart Gladstone, had naturally fallen away from him; but they had not ceased to respect and even to venerate his highmindedness, and his blameless private character. By the people he was literally worshipped. The average matter-of-fact Englishman might care very little about the Maynooth Grant, about Irish

Coercion Bills, or about the smashing of the crockery of the Maltese Jew, Don Pacifico, by a fanatical Greek mob—a breakage of cups and saucers which led to hot debates in both Houses, and culminated in a speech of five hours, delivered by Lord Palmerston, in the Commons, in the course of which oration he enunciated his famous dictum that the Briton abroad was everywhere entitled to England's protection, accentuating the declaration by quoting from Cicero against Verres the historic phrase *Civis Romanus sum.* But the people at large did care and enthusiastically care for the Conservative statesman who had sacrificed power to give the millions cheap bread; and there was scarcely a schoolboy who had not got by heart Sir Robert Peel's pathetic expression of his hopes that his name might live in the homes of those whose lot it was to labour, when at the end of their day's toil they recruited their exhausted strength by "abundant and untaxed food, no longer leavened by a sense of injustice."

Among the minor but still touching manifestations of the essentially national grief called forth by the death of this truly good and great man, I cannot forget that in many of the metropolitan divisions of police, the constables, with the permission of their officers, wore crape bands on their arms in memory of the Founder of the Force, and that on the day of his funeral, nearly all the public-houses in the immediate vicinity of Whitehall and the Houses of Parliament were closed.

Most of us are the merest creatures of circum-

stances; and I am confident now that it was the mere circumstance of the unlooked-for and the afflicting death of Sir Robert Peel that led me to christen my new venture the *Conservative Magazine.* It was a blunder from beginning to end. One rather eminent Conservative M.P. did indeed favour us with an article, on strictly party lines; but beyond that essay there was scarcely anything in the first number that could be considered as advocating, even in the mildest degree, the principles of Toryism. I contributed myself a long paper, entitled "Historic Doubts as to the Existence of George Hudson," which was a rather clumsy paraphrase of Archbishop Whately's "Historic Doubts on the Existence of Napoleon Bonaparte." George Hudson, the once well-known "Railway King," had just collapsed when I started the *Conservative Magazine.* I "pitched into him," to use a vulgar phrase; but if I had not been a simpleton, I should have held my hand, since I ought to have remembered that the dethroned monarch of railways was a very sound Tory; in fact, notwithstanding the heavy financial difficulties which forced him to reside abroad for many years, he never severed his connection with the Carlton Club, and towards the close of his life, when his circumstances had improved, he was unanimously elected president of the Carlton Smoking Room.

Of course, I had also an article on Sir Robert Peel; but instead of being a review of his political career, it was only a series of ill-natured strictures on the medical treatment to which he had been subjected after the

accident on Constitution Hill. It was supposed to be written by "A Country Surgeon"; but in reality the strictures were from the pen of a versatile friend of mine, Dr. Gustave Ludwig Moritz Strauss, who always gave me to understand that he was by birth a Prussian, but who late in life alleged that he was a British subject born in Canada, of French parents. I shall have more to say about him later on.

A second article from my pen in this unlucky Magazine was a jerky, scrappy, turgid screed, called "What Has Come Of It?"—being an ill-conditioned essay on the French Republic of 1848 and its consequences. I said just now that, prior to the death of Sir Robert Peel, I had no politics to speak of; but I had some political convictions with regard to France. I ventured to think the Republic of February was not only a blunder but a swindle; and I did my best to advocate the cause of Bonapartism. The remaining contents of the *Conservative Magazine* have entirely drifted out of my memory. Holt was my sub-editor, and my advertisement manager was a Mr. Richard Radcliffe Pond, who had been one of my co-partners in *Chat*. He was a clever man in his vocation; yet he did not succeed in obtaining any advertisements to speak of for the Magazine, which never went beyond the first number. I think I am speaking with accuracy when I say that the sale was six copies and a half. The half-copy I estimate in this wise: A gentleman—I should say that he was a good old Tory, for he wore a buff waistcoat—came in hot haste one morning to

purchase a copy of No. One. He explained, however, that he had only eighteenpence with him; but would bring the balance in the afternoon. He looked so thoroughly Conservative that I did not like to miss the chance of securing a possible subscriber, so I allowed him to take the number away with him. He never came back. To complete the list of mistakes associated with this luckless enterprise, I may mention that I designed and had engraved on wood for the title-page of the Magazine a little vignette of a man in armour waving a flag, on which I inscribed the well-known saying of the standard-bearer of Constantine the Great: *Hic optime manebimus*:—a thoroughly Conservative motto proclaiming a stern resolution not to march with revolutionary and subversive times. Unluckily, I attired my standard-bearer in the costume of one of Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides; when, properly, he should have been apparelled as a Cavalier in a plumed hat and a Vandyke lace collar.

Peace be with the *manes* of the *Conservative Magazine!* As my name was not attached to it, it does not at the present time even turn up in second-hand booksellers' catalogues as a literary curiosity; and once only about five-and-twenty years ago, being driven by stress of bad weather into a coffee-house in Holborn, where there was a small library, I found, to my great amusement, in the catalogue a copy of the *Conservative Magazine*, No. One and last. The coffee-house has long since been pulled down; and its site is occupied by part of the Inns of Court Hotel.

The library was, I suppose, dispersed; and what became of that solitary copy of that wretched Magazine who shall say? I very soon ceased to think about it or about Conservatism either. I had just two hundred pounds left, which, in the sanguine impetuosity of youth, I reckoned that I could turn ere long into at least two thousand.

The acquaintances of my friend Dr. Gustave Ludwig Moritz Strauss were numerous, and belonged to various classes of society. Among them was a gentleman long since deceased, and whose name perhaps there would be no harm in giving; but as he may have relations who are still alive, I think that the best course to adopt will be to call him Mr. Hopeful. He had had, I understood, at some period or another something to do with the law, but whether he had been a barrister disbarred for some breach of forensic etiquette, or a solicitor who had been struck off the rolls at the instigation of the Incorporated Law Society, I really cannot say. Suffice it to say that he was on the whole a slightly "shady" individual.

He was a person of most gentlemanly manners; had travelled extensively; spoke several languages, and used occasionally to hint at the pack of hounds which he had kept in his youth, and the horses which he had entered for divers races. You used to meet with these travelled, well-educated, shady gentlemen much more frequently forty years ago than you do now. Sometimes they had been lawyers, sometimes clergymen, and very often captains. I have known two "shady" baronets, and

had even a slight acquaintance with a shady lord. But he died. I cannot help thinking that it is the wonderful acceleration of railway travelling and steam navigation and of telegraphy all over the world, that has thinned the ranks of the quasi-aristocratic or quasi-military "shady" class. Boulogne and Calais are no longer cities of refuge for insolvent Britons; while Brussels and Paris are so continually traversed by prosperous English tradesmen enjoying their holidays, that the shady debtor must always run the risk of encountering a perhaps indignant creditor.

Mr. Hopeful was a Man with a System. I mean that he was firmly persuaded that by persistently and consistently playing according to certain rules at the game of *rouge et noir*, he could win very large sums at a public gaming table. He *had* been winning very large sums between 1848 and 1850; but somehow, after making many thousands of thalers at Homburg, he had experienced terrible ill-luck at Baden-Baden, and had come temporarily to utter grief at Wiesbaden. At this distance of time I hesitate to say that Mr. Hopeful was in any respect a dishonest or untruthful individual. He was only a confirmed gambler with a System; and a gambler with a System must be, to a greater or smaller extent, insane. He fully explained to me his plan, which was certainly plausible and seemed feasible enough. He could manage, he said, to raise fifty pounds capital. I was to furnish a hundred and have two-thirds of the profits, while Dr. Strauss was to accompany us as a disinterested friend of both parties and "see fair."

There were only a few yards lacking to the completion of my inordinate panoramic view of the Great Exhibition which was to be; the pen-and-ink drawings were all ready to be traced down on the stone; and an artistic friend of mine, Mr. Benjamin Clayton, undertook to etch them. So with a light heart we set out on our expedition in quest of wealth. But whither? you may ask. Mr. Hopeful, who was slightly superstitious—as is the case with most gamesters—frankly confessed that for the time he thought it better to give Homburg, Baden, and Wiesbaden the go-by; until at least we had well feathered our nest at some less pretentious Continental *tripot*. Monte Carlo was not yet in existence; but there was a public gaming house in Monaco itself. High stakes, however, were rarely ventured on there; and it was many hundreds of miles away; travelling was costly, and I doubt even if the railway to Nice, much less to the capital of Prince Grimaldi, was completed.

There remained a choice of two Continental towns where public gaming was tolerated. There was Geneva and there was Aix-la-Chapelle. Dr. Strauss was in favour of tossing up as to which of these towns we should repair. Heads for the city of Charlemagne; tails for the birthplace of Jean Jacques Rousseau. But my head was full of what I had read about Karl der Grosse and the treasures of the Domkirche, and the Congress in 1818 to which Carème, the famous cook, followed his employer, Lord Stewart, afterwards Marquis of Londonderry; and as holder of two-thirds

of our joint capital of one hundred and fifty pounds, I put my foot down and resolved that the place for the trial of our infallible system—our most infallible system—should be Aix-la-Chapelle or nowhere. I had an odd prejudice, furthermore, against Switzerland in general and Geneva in particular. It was not because I had any dislike to the Swiss, who are a brave, patriotic, pious, and ingenious people, but among divers, doubtless absurd, idiosyncrasies of mine has always been a rooted aversion from mountainous countries, and I knew that you could see Mont Blanc from Geneva. It has been my lot during a professional career of two score years to cross, I know not how many times, almost every known Alpine pass on mule-back, in *diligences*, in a travelling carriage, and by railway; and I have always done my best to sleep soundly till we had ascended and descended the pass and were in the plain again. Over and over again have I traversed the Alps and the Semmering; I have travelled in the mountainous regions of Mexico and in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. The Sierra Morena and the Sierra Nevada in Spain are familiar to me; and frequently have I risked my neck in a stage-coach on roads bordering steep precipices in New Zealand; but I have never ceased to distrust and dislike mountainous scenery.

In fact, I may say that rocks and crags and snow-clad summits fill me with horror, not unmixed with terror. I long for the valleys, for towns full of noise, and bustle, and men, women, and children. This, very possibly, you may ascribe first to my being a Cockney,

and next to my being normally destitute of any appreciation of the romantic or the picturesque in Nature. I am not ashamed to admit that such very probably is the case; still I cannot help suspecting that a great part of my distaste for mountains arises from the circumstance that as a boy at school in France, I won the first prize for geography with a map in relief, modelled in clay, of South America. The toil which I had bestowed on measuring the altitude of the different chains of mountains that I modelled, inspired me, it is possible, with a profound weariness of and unfriendly feeling for the real mountains among which I was destined in after-life so often to wander.

We had not much money available for travelling expenses, and determined to be as economical as possible till we reached Aix-la-Chapelle, where, of course, after a night or two at the *trente-et-quarante* table the golden Fredericks would come tumbling down into our pockets as copiously as, according to Southey, the waters come down at Lodore. So we took shipping at the Old Swan Stairs, London Bridge, and proceeded by steamer to Ostend; and thence we made the best of our way, I forget whether by *diligence* or rail, to Brussels.

Young, sanguine, and in rude health, I can scarcely describe the joy I felt at finding myself on the shores of a country new to me. Hitherto, my boyish travels had been confined to France; but here in Belgium was a land which, though French in some respects, was in others wholly and delightfully un-

accustomed to me. Brussels filled me with an absolute rapture of enjoyment. The steep winding Montagne de la Cour, with its glittering shops, was perhaps a little too precipitous to suit my prejudices; but, at all events, the mountain was one of houses, and not of rocks. But the delights of the Parc; the excellent *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel de Flandre—we did not venture to alight at the adjoining Hôtel Bellevue—and, then, the wonderful Market Place, the towering Hôtel de Ville, the quaint old Maison du Roi, the Maison des Brasseurs, and the ancient edifice on the façade of which was inscribed the terrified invocation: "*A Fame, Peste et Bello, Domine, Libera Nos.*" Poor *Bruxellois!* In the old times they had ample reason, goodness knows, to pray to be delivered from Famine, Pestilence, and War. Then there were the Galéries St. Hubert, and the great theatre of La Monnaie, and a dozen other places of interest to be viewed during a sojourn scarcely extending over twenty-four hours.

We had no time to make an excursion to the field of Waterloo; for on the afternoon following the day of our arrival we sped by rail to the German frontier. We had a good deal of trouble at the German Custom House; and, for the first time in my life, I made the acquaintance of that remarkable type of officialism, the Prussian *gendarme*—a very worthy person, no doubt; martial-looking, well set up, and correct to a button in his uniform, but who, to all appearance, labours under the inconvenience of having been born with an iron poker instead of a backbone. He is a sturdy, gallant,

honest, and in the main good-hearted fellow, your officialised Prussian. Still it is unfortunately impossible to infuse the slightest amount of flexibility into that rigid spine of his.

I am unable to form the slightest idea as to where the Kursaal, or public gaming saloon, was situated. Perhaps it may have been somewhere near the Grand Monarque Hotel. In any case, we set to work on the evening of our arrival at Aix. Neither I nor the doctor played so much as a thaler, but we stood and watched the experienced Mr. Hopeful operating at *trente-et-quarante;* and from time to time he handed to me his winnings, reserving only a sufficient sum as working capital. The rooms closed at twelve; and when we sat down to supper I made my pockets disgorge their booty. They were full of thalers and Friedrichs; and I should say that our net profits that night had amounted to a hundred and fifty pounds in English money.

It was the old, old story; so old indeed as to be scarcely worth repeating. We had won fully eight hundred pounds, when Mr. Hopeful suddenly changed his tactics, and played another Infallible System, by which he very soon contrived to lose heavily. Then he went back to his old system, and lost at that. Then I thought that I would try *my* luck at the *roulette* table. In the course of two hours I won fifty pounds; and in the course of two minutes I lost it; result after a week's operations—total collapse. I had a handsome gold watch, a scarf-pin, and a couple

of rings; and the discreet assistant of Herr Israel Hirsch, or Herr Salomon Fuchs, having been called in, and my personal valuables realised, I managed, with the further aid of a Bank of England note for ten pounds, which I had secreted in my writing-desk, to discharge the hotel bill, and pay the fare for Dr. Strauss and myself to Paris. The behaviour of Mr. Hopeful, under these somewhat trying circumstances, was calm and dignified, and, I may almost say, heroic. He acknowledged that his having imprudently changed his system had been the primary cause of all our disasters; but, although he allowed me to defray his share of the hotel bill, he resolutely refused his consent to my proposal that I should pay his fare to Paris.

All he wanted was a couple of louis; he had got another Infallible System, by means of which a large fortune was to be made by backing the number "thirty-five" at *roulette*: the stake never exceeding a single thaler at a time; but you had to wait for a great many revolutions of the wheel before "thirty-five" was mathematically certain to turn up; and it might, perhaps, take a whole month to acquire the wealth he was certain was in his grasp, and which he generously promised to share with me. So I handed him the two louis, and bade him a cordial farewell. I got a letter from him some weeks afterwards, with the Frankfort post-mark; and in this billet he informed me that Fortune had not yet favoured him to any considerable extent, but that he was on the move and hoping for brighter days. Would I kindly write to

him to the address, "*Poste restante.*" "*Poste restante*" where? I tried Frankfort; but received no answer to my missive. It must have been some other "*Poste restante,*" possibly at Pondicherry, or Chandernagore, or Noumea. Be it as it may, I never saw nor heard from Mr. Hopeful again.

I devoted a few hours prior to our departure for the French capital to paying a flying visit to some of the leading lions of Aix-la-Chapelle. Figuratively speaking, the lions roared, but their roar sounded in my ears like a proclamation that "red had won," or that "black had lost," while the bells of the churches seemed to be clanging forth incessant intimations of "*Le jeu est fait; rien ne va plus.*" I saw the tomb of Charlemagne, over which something closely akin to a roulette-wheel seemed to be suspended; and, finally, I inspected the celebrated Hot-Springs, which naturally at once, and not very agreeably, suggested the remarkably hot water into which I had got myself through my belief in Mr. Hopeful and his Infallible System. But Hope springs eternal in the human breast; and, at twenty-two years of age, it does not matter much if you have been temporarily ruined at a gaming table.

We had, on the whole, a very pleasant journey to Paris, by the way of Strasburg; and I was much edified by Dr. Strauss holding a lengthened conversation, in the Latin tongue, with three German students. At every station at which the train stopped, the party got out to eat *Butterbrods* and sausages, and drink beer; and then

they talked more and more volubly in the language of Cicero and Livy, and played dominoes and cards, and smoked perpetually. When we reached Paris, our finances being of the most limited kind, we abstained from repairing to an hotel, but took a couple of small bedrooms in a tall old house in the Rue de l'École de Médecine; and there we remained till the firm of Ackermann sent me a remittance on account of a new comic panorama of the Great Exhibition, of a more ambitious kind than the former one, and which this time was not to be engraved on stone, but etched on copper.

I had some fifty or sixty pen-and-ink sketches to make before the copper plates could be attacked; and the autumn being a remarkably fine one, I thought that I would take a trip into Lancashire, and even visit the Isle of Man. I roamed about north-west England for some two months; and I should say that during that period I fell in love at least eleven times, always with strictly honourable intentions. My amorousness was, I surmise, of the nature popularly known as "calf love." Unfortunately, none of the objects of my affections would have anything to say to me; much to the surprise of a worthy old lady who kept an hotel at New Brighton, near Liverpool, and who took a fancy to me, first, because, as she put it, I was "classical," and next, because I could eat jam. Jam was certainly a very curious road to an old lady's favour; but she happened to have two pretty daughters, two or three nieces, and a number of good-looking female acquaintances, whose

hands were being continually sought in marriage; and her main objection to their suitors was that, as a rule, they were unable, or objected, to eat jam: especially at those high-teas so pleasantly associated with Lancashire manners and customs.

The high-tea of forty years since was, and is still, I hope, an ideal repast: baked mackerel, ham, poached eggs, tea-cakes of every imaginable form, and any amount of jam. I noticed that the old lady very narrowly watched the first time that I partook of her hospitality. She smiled benignantly when I asked for marmalade; but when she saw me make a resolute onslaught on a pot of preserved apricots, she exclaimed triumphantly: "He'll do, Sally; he can eat jam!" Sally, unhappily, was not of the same mind with her parent.

As to my being "classical," her impression in that respect arose, I should say, from the fact that, although an unsophisticated old lady, who spoke the broadest Lancashire dialect, she had a very profound respect for people who possessed even moderate scholarship. She had known, and had been the humble friend of, the illustrious Lord Brougham, and she told me some very curious anecdotes of the great orator and lawyer. How, when he left his home to go to London, he exclaimed, embracing his mother: "Here goes for Lord Chancellor;" and how, throughout his early struggles, as throughout his after-career of splendour and fame, he never omitted to write to that mother every day while she was alive.

When, as Harry Brougham, he was contesting

an election in Yorkshire my old lady friend had, as an hotel-keeper, rendered him considerable services; and he generously acknowledged this help by the present of a horse and gig. One story she told me of his childhood, I put in print myself many years ago, but the public memory is short, and it is sometimes permissible and even beneficial to dig up an old chestnut. When Harry Brougham was quite a little boy his mother had a careless servant who was continually breaking glasses and crockery ware; and her apology after the commission of one of these acts of destruction was invariably the plea, in the local dialect, that the broken article had been "crackit" before. One day, little boy Harry, who was a frolicsome urchin, managed to tumble down-stairs, from the first-floor landing, into the hall. Mrs. Brougham, in an agony of anxiety, rushed from the parlour to the succour of her son, ejaculating: "Harry, my darling Harry, you must have broken your head!" "Nay, mither," replied the future Chancellor, "*it was crackit before.*"

My old lady friend had also known Hartley Coleridge, one of the sons of Samuel Taylor Coleridge the poet; and she was full of stories of Hartley's learning and kind-heartedness, his fondness for children, and his somewhat excessive addictedness to the flowing bowl. On one occasion, in some out-of-the-way village in the Lake District, he consented to deliver a lecture on Wordsworth; and on the appointed evening the church schoolroom was crowded by an expectant audience. After keeping them waiting for a quarter

of an hour, Hartley Coleridge made his appearance; ascended the platform; opened a manuscript; looked round, and then, in a strident voice, delivered himself of the following startling utterance, "Lily-white muffins." That was all the vicar, and a curate, and the church schoolmistress could get out of him, and he ended as he began, with "Lily-white muffins." So you see that although my old lady friend was not the rose, she had lived on the skirts of a rose garden, whence her esteem for that which she called "classical."

CHAPTER XXIII.

BALLOONING.

Taking a Share in a Balloon—Lieutenant Gale and his Plan for Finding Franklin—A Small Audience and a Disappointed Confectioner.

I WAS in harness again during the winter months of 1850 in London, steadily working at my etchings, and supplementing my modest earnings by occasional "pot-boilers," received for water-colour drawings and lithographic drawings in chalk or in ink, always for the account of my constant patrons, the Ackermanns. Of literature or journalism I had ceased even to dream; but that I was not entirely cured of my propensity for speculation was shown by the circumstance that ere the year was out, I was able to buy a share of one third of a balloon. A side-windfall had brought us another small freehold house property; and on the sale of this, at Gallaway's, I put a hundred pounds into the balloon adventure. Of the aerostatic machine itself I watched the manufacture, which was carried on in the upper room of a floorcloth warehouse, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Blackfriars Road. The silk used for the balloon had first to be carefully varnished, and then was cut into long torpedo-shaped gores, which were attentively sewn together by females.

One of my associates in the balloon enterprise was a Lieutenant Gale, whose acquaintance I had made a

couple of years before. He had been, I think, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and had commanded a coast-guard station somewhere in the north of Ireland; but he had passed a good many years of his life in the United States, following what avocation I know not, but failing, apparently, to realise any substantial profits therefrom. He was not, like my friend Mr. Henry Coxwell, a scientific aeronaut; but he was a man of the most dauntless courage—as gallant, perhaps, as the Prince of Aeronauts, Mr. Charles Green—and his early training as a seaman had given him that quickness of action, and clearness of head, and readiness of resource, which are absolutely indispensable in what I may call the skipper of an aerial ship. He was a dreamer of dreams; and was one of the many projectors who had conceived the idea of a balloon which could be navigated. He had no literary faculty; but he communicated his views to me, and I wrote for him a lecture on ballooning in general, and on the possibilities of aerial navigation in particular, which he was to deliver in certain large provincial towns, allowing me a handsome proportion of the profits.

At this period all England was talking about the vanished Arctic Expedition, and the lost Sir John Franklin and his heroic companions. The lieutenant had conceived the odd notion that the ships of the Expedition might be lying *perdu* behind some gigantic iceberg; and his proposal was to proceed in a steamer specially fitted up for the purpose to the Arctic Regions, and make restricted, or "captive" balloon

ascents, in the hope of surveying vast tracts of icy deserts, and possibly lighting on some vestiges of the lost ships. I drew out for him a memorial to the Lords of the Admiralty, on which document I need scarcely say a plentiful *douche* of official cold water was very promptly poured. Then Gale bombarded the Press with details of his scheme. A few of the newspapers inserted his communications; but they led to no greater result than a caricature and half a column of disparaging ridicule in *Punch*. I believe that the only distinguished personage who ever condescended to examine Gale's plan with attention, and who looked upon it with some degree of approval, was the Prince Consort. But the lieutenant was miserably poor; he had a huge family of young children, and was wholly incompetent to advance his views, or make interest, in influential quarters. He centred his hopes on an itinerant lecture, illustrated by models and diagrams, in the execution of which I helped him as well as I could. He was to commence his campaign at Hull, at which whaling seaport deep interest had always been felt in the fate of Franklin and his comrades—an interest increased by the frequent visits to Hull of the devoted wife of the heroic explorer. I think, indeed, that Lady Franklin even granted Lieutenant Gale an interview; but she failed to grasp the scope of his scheme.

I took a week's holiday to see my friend the lieutenant well started on his lecturing tour, so we travelled to the northern seaport by way of Birmingham; and in the Midland Metropolis I had the advantage of

meeting and of conversing—I think it was in the smoking-room of the Hen and Chickens Hotel—with the world-famous manufacturer of steel pens and collector of works of art and antique violins, Mr. Joseph Gillott. At Hull we had engaged some Assembly Rooms for three nights. We had money enough to advertise the lecture pretty liberally in the local newspapers, which obliged us with a number of highly complimentary paragraphs, predicting brilliant success for the gallant Lieutenant Gale, R.N., the undaunted aeronaut, projector of an aerial ship, and potential saviour of Sir John Franklin.

In the course of the forenoon a prominent local confectioner waited on me, as the lieutenant's man of business, and asked for the concession of the sole right to sell refreshments during the three evenings on which the lectures were to be delivered. "Certainly," I replied, "but how much would he give for the privilege?" "A pound," suggested the confectioner. I put my hand to my forehead, as though in profound meditation, and at length I said, as seriously as I could, "Thirty shillings." "Split the difference, Mister, and make it five-and-twenty bob," returned the man of pies and tarts; and, not without some show of reluctance, I accepted his offer. Alas! for the vanity of human wishes and the fallacy of human hopes. The night came, and I was money-taker at the Assembly Rooms. Anxiously did I listen for the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs; but I am afraid, in the whole body of the hall and gallery all round, our audience did not

muster more than six-and-twenty, including half-a-dozen fisher-lads, who paid half-price, and the inevitable old lady with the crush bonnet and the big umbrella, whom I have rarely known to be absent from the first night of any lecture in the civilised world.

I have met her in London, in New York, in San Francisco, and all over Australia and New Zealand; and I recollect once that she turned up at a public meeting of the Byron Memorial Committee at Willis's Rooms. Benjamin Disraeli was in the chair, and the old lady was in the front row of the reserved seats. As the great orator dwelt on the genius and the stormy life of Byron the old lady with the big umbrella rocked her body to and fro, and, to my astonishment, began to weep bitterly. Whether she was sorry that Lord Byron and his wife did not get on very well together, or whether she was moved to tears by the moving address of the right honourable president, I am incompetent to say; but there she was, and there she will be, I imagine, on many public occasions, long after I have joined the majority.

The worst of it was, that sitting in my money-taker's box, with nothing to do, I could hear the sonorous voice of Lieutenant Gale echoing through the almost empty hall, and interrupted at no infrequent intervals by cries of "Yah!" "Shut up!" "Put your head in a bag!" and so forth. Soon I was to hear another voice, tuned to tones quite as hostile, close to my own little niche. It was the voice of the local confectioner. "Where's the five-and-twenty bob?"

he shouted; "Gimme back my one pound five. Blow your haoryhosstation." And to these he added, I am afraid, many substantives and adjectives unfit for publication. Fortunately I had taken the precaution of locking myself in my box; so, after shaking his fist at me a good many times, he grew weary of vilipending me, and, going away, was seen no more. The remaining two of the course of lectures were not delivered. As for the share which I subsequently had, or was to have, in the balloon which I saw made, it was not productive of remunerative results; since, before the machine was completed, Lieutenant Gale accepted an engagement to make a series of balloon ascents in Paris and in other towns of the French departments. At first he was highly successful; but a few weeks afterwards, at Bordeaux, the machine in which he ascended came to grief; he fell out of the car, and his dead body was discovered a few days afterwards, half-devoured by dogs, in a wood.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORLD'S FAIR.

Alexis Soyer—Disraeli—The Opening of the Great Exhibition—The Refreshment Department—In a Balloon Accident—A Letter to the *Times* and its Consequences—Abandoning Art for Journalism—Benjamin Lumley and his Kindness.

The year 1851 broke tolerably bright on me. I had plenty of work; and, moreover, I had struck up a close alliance with the celebrated French cook, Alexis Soyer, for whose cosmopolitan restaurant at Gore House, Kensington—to which he had given the attractive title of "Soyer's Symposium"—I had painted on the walls of the grand staircase a would-be comic panorama, in which nearly all the celebrities of the day were depicted. For Soyer likewise I wrote a quarto *catalogue raisonné* describing the decorations and general appointments of the establishment. As to my panorama on the staircase, Soyer, who was nothing if not fantastic, and to a certain extent quackish, insisted, to my reluctance and no small disgust, in calling it "The Grand Macédoine of All Nations; being a Demisemitragicomipanodicosmopolytolyofanofunniosymposiorama, or Suchagettingupstairstothegreatexhibition of 1851." I groaned as I interpolated this hideous rubbish in my manuscript; but it was a case of Ancient Pistol and the leek. I wrote, and eke I swore.

The figures in the panorama all had very big heads and very small bodies. Some were on foot, some on horseback, and some mounted on griffins, dragons, giraffes, elephants, hippopotami, camels, rhinoceroses, and mastodons; while among the characters represented were the ghosts of William Pitt and Charles James Fox, Napoleon, Wellington—the great Duke came more than once to Gore House—Abd-el-Kader, General Tom Thumb, Joseph Adie the Quaker swindler, Dickens, Thackeray, Mark Lemon, George Cruikshank, Jullien, Albert Smith, Barbier the *tambour major*, Douglas Jerrold, Victor Hugo, Cobden, Minerva, Sir George Wombwell (the father of the present popular baronet), John Bright, Cobden, Mr. Toole the toastmaster, "Graveyard" Walker,* and the Marquis of Londonderry. The great statesman afterwards to become Earl of Beaconsfield had not, in 1851, by any means abandoned the pomps and vanities of well-oiled ringlets, gorgeous waistcoats, and meandering gold chains; and on the day he came to Gore House he was exceptionally sumptuous in his attire. He presented Soyer with a quotation from one of his novels—which one I forget; but it contained an allusion to the Beautiful, and was printed on white watered silk or satin, with a gold fringe. I wonder how many of those decorative excerpts are in existence, and who

* Dr. Walker, of St. James's Place, earned his *sobriquet* from having been principally instrumental in bringing about the abolition of intramural interments. In early life he had practised in Drury Lane; and could remember the horrors of the graveyard depicted by Dickens in "Bleak House."

are the possessors of what may be considered really interesting relics.

The cooking at Soyer's Symposium was of the very highest class—that is to say, if you had a *cabinet particulier;* but Soyer had to cater for the masses; he had even to supply shilling dinners in an immense marquee at the bottom of the grounds; and the masses occasionally grumbled. The result from a pecuniary point of view was catastrophe; and the energetic *chef* told me afterwards that he had come out of his Symposium enterprise with just one hundred pounds in cash, in the world. In addition to my artistic and literary labours at the Symposium, I officiated as Soyer's general adviser and keeper of his correspondence: accepting no regular salary, as did his regular *employés;* but taking from time to time a moderate honorarium from an always open-handed but sometimes necessitous artist.

On the whole, I venture to think that my connection with the Symposium was, in the long run, productive of much more benefit to me than it was to its founder. I came in contact with a large number of well-known persons; and the friendship of many of these I was fortunate enough to retain during a long period of years. Conspicuous among these acquaintances was the well-known civil engineer, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Fox, who, with his partner, Mr. Henderson, had taken the contract for building Paxton's great Palace of Glass in Hyde Park. He gave me a card of admission to the Exhibition building many weeks before

it was open to the public. The card bore the magic words, "Pass everywhere;" and I was consequently enabled to inspect all the details of the works in progress, and to strengthen thereby the passionate love for technical knowledge which has always been predominant in me. Roaming, day by day, about the unfinished, but already marvellous and imposing, structure, I became acquainted with Owen Jones, the architect, and author of those two great works, "The Alhambra" and "The Grammar of Ornament." There also for the first time I met Matthew Digby Wyatt, Charles Wentworth Dilke (father of the present baronet), Peter Le Neve Foster (secretary of the Society of Arts), and Henry Cole.

Naturally, I was at the opening of the Great Exhibition on the First of May, 1851. The story of that dazzling pageant has been told so often, and so fully, that I am positively ashamed to set down anything more on paper touching the beginning, the course, and the end of the World's Fair; but I may just allude to one trifling circumstance which I think has escaped the memory of most of my contemporaries. The refreshment department of the Exhibition—a department at which the catering was of the most meagre kind—was conducted on strictly teetotal lines; neither wine, beer, nor ardent spirits being obtainable by the thirsty thousands who flocked to Hyde Park. But just prior to the opening of the colossal show, Soyer received a communication from the Executive Committee of the Exhibition, informing him that if he felt disposed to

tender for the refreshment contract, the Commissioners would consider the expediency of allowing him to sell single glasses of wine. The *chef* had, however, quite enough on his hands with his Symposium, and declined to make any tender for feeding the visitors to the Exhibition. The summer wore away; and my series of etched copper-plates, which formed so many pictures of the humours of Hyde Park, both inside and outside Paxton's wonderful conservatory, were published. I have forgotten the name of the book, and, oddly enough, I have never seen it quoted in the catalogue of a second-hand bookseller; yet a good many thousand copies were disposed of. There are some things, I take it, after all that do wholly and entirely vanish from our ken.

It was mid-autumn; and in the dying days of the Symposium of All Nations a somewhat memorable adventure, and one that had a strong bearing on my future career, befell me at Gore House, among the afternoon diversions of which balloon ascents had begun to be prominent. In one of those ascents I was foolish enough to take part—perhaps I remembered my connection with Lieutenant Gale—and, as I have related more than once, the balloon, which was under the command of an aeronaut named Bell, burst at the altitude of a mile just after we had crossed the Thames. One half-mile we fell like a stone; then, by the tact and the presence of mind of the aeronaut, one Mr. Chambers, he converted the tattered balloon into a parachute, by means of which we descended safely,

although I was bruised from head to foot, in a market-garden at Putney.

A good many of my literary friends have made balloon ascents, and one of them, Albert Smith, nearly lost his life through the machine descending on some scaffold poles round a house in course of construction; and I am consequently not at all desirous to give unnecessary inflation to my own experience of aerostatics. I may remark, however, that a few days after the accident, it happened that I paid a visit to Vauxhall Gardens, where I found my friend the veteran aeronaut, Mr. Charles Green, preparing for an aerial voyage in his huge Nassau balloon. With great courtesy he offered me a seat in the car, observing that I should have the opportunity of knowing what an ascent conducted on strictly scientific principles was like. It is possible that he had no very great admiration for Mr. Bell's balloon, which was shaped like a large German sausage, suspended horizontally in the empyrean. I thanked Mr. Green for his polite offer of hospitality, but told him that I had had quite enough to do with ballooning, both in a physical and a financial sense, and that I considered that altogether I was well out of it.

But now comes an unexpected sequel to my adventure in Mr. Bell's sausage-shaped aerostat. Escaping, as I had done, by the skin of my teeth, from almost certain death, I was for several days in a state of great nervous excitement; and I was stupid enough to write a lengthy letter to the *Times*, in which I

vehemently denounced the folly and foolhardiness of balloon ascents undertaken for the mere amusement of crowds of gaping sightseers. In the course of this letter I remarked, incidentally, that I was an artist. The day following its publication, the *Morning Post* came down on me with a slashing leading article about my injudicious letter; and the writer of the onslaught was good enough to opine that if I was indeed an artist, as I had called myself, I was probably one of those conceited creatures who, because they wore moustaches and long hair, and attired themselves in shawl pattern dressing-gowns and velvet smoking-caps, deluded themselves into the belief that they could paint. The article in the *Post* threw me for a time into a very great rage, not like Mrs. Bond in the ballad, "with plenty of onions and plenty of sage"—for at the time in question I was short, not only of sage and onions, but of ducks into the bargain—but with the editor of the *Morning Post*, and especially with myself.

Why had I been so asinine as to call myself an artist, and why had I written the wretched letter at all? Beshrew art! I had worked at it since I was fourteen and a half, harder than negro slave ever worked in the cane. Its practice had never brought me anything better than bread-and-cheese, and sometimes cheese failed to accompany the bread; and I had to confess, with inward despair, that I was not destined to excel either as a painter in oils or water-colours, an etcher, a lithographer, or a draughtsman

on wood. Why could not I work for the newspapers? Why should I not endeavour by sedulous study to qualify myself for the profession of a journalist? I managed to purchase at an "Aunt Sally" shop near Clare Market at least a hundred numbers of the *Quarterly Review*. They were not consecutive; they were ragged and dog's-eared; but I got them at the rate of twopence a copy. Then, almost for the price of waste paper, I bought a set of the *Examiner* newspaper from its commencement in 1808 to 1841; and then I shut myself up, devoting myself four hours a day to bread-winning, graphic work for Ackermann; and giving up at least six hours more to hard and fast study of essays in the *Quarterly* and the *Examiner*, which I knew to have been written by such masters of English style as Walter Scott and Charles Lamb; as Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Southey, Croker, and Lockhart. I was determined, in my own mind, to throw art to the dogs so soon as ever I could, and be a working journalist. That I did eventually become; but through a portal then wholly ignored and unsuspected by me. Indirectly, nevertheless, I have always attributed my entrance into journalism to the slashing leader in the *Morning Post;* and so long years afterwards I laughingly told the late Sir William Hardman, who for a long period was editor of the *Post*, and the chairman of the Surrey Sessions. A just, sagacious, clever man.

Another ally whom I was fortunate enough to make in the year 1851 was Mr. Benjamin Lumley,

the lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre. He came one day to Gore House, while I was working at my panorama on the walls of the staircase; we had some pleasant conversation, since, young as I was, I was already an old operatic hand, so far as familiarity with operas and remembrance of famous musical *artistes* were concerned. The next day Mr. Lumley wrote to Soyer, saying that he had missed the name of the young gentleman who was painting the staircase; but he wished to be reminded of it, as he should be glad to place his name on the free list of Her Majesty's Theatre for the ensuing season.

I could not have received a more welcome boon; and many happy evenings the liberality of Mr. Lumley enabled me to spend in 1851 and 1852. Lumley was a type of character well worth studying. He was dark, and good-looking, and with a not very *prononcé* Jewish cast of countenance. His manners were those of a refined and polished gentleman. He had begun life as a solicitor; and in that capacity had been consulted by M. Laporte, a Frenchman, and one of the many struggling lessees of the Haymarket Opera House. The embarrassments of Laporte, in fine, led to his arrest and incarceration in the Fleet Prison, where he found a fellow-captive in Mr. Chambers, the banker, who had also been disastrously associated with Her Majesty's. As for Manager Laporte, he got comfortably white-washed, and resumed his lesseeship of the White Elephantine house; but he was so struck by the acumen and common sense which he had noticed in Mr. Lumley

that he induced him to abandon his intention of going to the Bar, for which he was studying under the guidance of Mr. Basil Montague, and undertake the superintendence of the financial department of the theatre. Laporte died suddenly. Mr. Lumley was one of his executors; and in 1842 he became sole lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre. His long reign ended, through no fault of his, in disaster, but not in insolvency. For a considerable period after his abdication of the Haymarket throne he lived in Paris, and from time to time we corresponded.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE STAFF OF *HOUSEHOLD WORDS.*

Articled to an Engraver—*Harlequin Billy Taylor*—To Paris: the *Coup d'État*—A Visit to the Lapin Blanc in Disguise—Dion Boucicault and the *Corsican Brothers*—A Rival Version—Charles Sala's Retirement from the Stage.

It is time that I should tell my readers that late in 1851 I wrote my first article, called "The Key of the Street," in *Household Words*, a weekly journal conducted by Charles Dickens; and for the next six years scarcely a week passed without my contributing a paper, long or short, sometimes a story, sometimes a social essay, and sometimes a notice of a book, to the columns of the periodical in question. Not unfrequently the weekly issue would contain two articles from my pen. The estimation in which the conductor of the journal was good enough to hold my services has been more than once, and most generously, alluded to by the late Mr. John Forster, in his "Life of Charles Dickens." I shall have to tell you, later on, that this connection with *Household Words*, which brought me an average weekly income of five pounds, was remotely the means of converting me into one of the idlest young dogs that ever rambled about between London and Paris, London and Lancashire, and Lancashire and Ireland, and that ever—to all appearance, at least—wasted his precious time in a seemingly reckless and wholly indefensible

manner. On this head, however, I must not forestall things; the ample confession of my indolence will be made in due time. I was to go through a lengthened course of dogged hard labour before I joined the worthless brotherhood of lotus-eaters.

As I have already said, so early as the beginning of 1850 I had, by the advice of Mr. Adolphus Ackermann, one of the partners of the firm whose warehouse or "Repository of Arts" was No. 96, Strand—where now is the perfumery shop of Mr. Eugene Rimmel—apprenticed, or rather articled myself, to a practical engraver on steel and copper. The firm lent me the money to buy my articles; and I repaid them by instalments. I learnt, and became tolerably proficient in every process of the engraver's art, not only in an artistic, but in a commercial sense; and but for the circumstance that my vision has become slightly impaired, and that age and too much tobacco have made my hand shake, I have little doubt that I could engrave a tradesman's bill-head, or the form of a cheque, or a bill of exchange, now. The engraver's workshop was in Beaufort Buildings, Strand; and there I toiled and toiled during the day. At night I worked at artistic commissions in a studio on the ground floor of a house of which I was tenant, in Wellington Street North, Strand. The really industrious always have leisure; it is only the idle who are unable to find time, even for slight and casual employment. Diligently as I had slaved over my plates and lithographic stones I had found the time, during at least four months in 1851, to help Soyer at

Gore House; and later in the year I had leisure to write, in conjunction with my brother Charles and Mr. George Ellis, a pantomime for the Princess's Theatre, then under the management of Mr. Charles Kean. I find, in Mr. John William Cole's "Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean," Vol. II., page 38, that the different pieces acted (1851-52) amounted to exactly the same number as in the year preceding, namely, twenty-seven, of which nine were new. "Amongst the latter the pantomime of *Billy Taylor* must not be forgotten, which completed its full attraction of nine consecutive weeks, and fully upheld the reputation which the house had long enjoyed in that most important branch of the art dramatic." Mr. J. W. Cole had been, I believe, originally an officer in the army. Subsequently, and for several years, he was, under the *nom de guerre* of Calcraft, lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Dublin; and when Charles Kean became sole lessee of the Princess's, Mr. Cole-Calcraft, who had retired from Dublin management, became his secretary and confidential agent—his first lieutenant, in fact. He did not like me, and I did not like him; and to that mutual aversion, perhaps, is due the omission in his biography of the names of the authors of the pantomime of *Harlequin Billy Taylor*.

Who suggested the subject for the extravaganza I forget; but I know that I wrote all the rhymed dialogue, that my brother wrote the words of the songs, and that Mr. George Ellis, who was the stage manager of the Princess's, rendered us valuable practical assistance in

arranging the *scenario* and general business of the piece. Dickens took a lively interest in this little dramatic essay on the part of one of the members of his staff; and while the pantomime was in course of rehearsal I rarely went to the office of *Household Words* on business, or sat at Dickens's own hospitable board, without his questioning and cross-questioning me as to "how the thing was getting on?" We began to rehearse it in the second week in November, and on the 2nd of December, 1851, Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* took place in Paris. That night I left Charing Cross for the French capital. I had no journalistic mission; there was no valid reason why I should leave my work at all; but there was within me an irresistible impulse to hasten, as fast as ever the rail and the steamer would take me, to the scene of action. I was a pecuniary loser by the week's trip, which cost me twenty pounds, since all I made by my journey was five pounds, the ordinary price for an article in *Household Words*, which article, in this instance, bore the name of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Musketry." The paper is extant in one of my books, I am sure I forget which; but could I remember its whereabouts I should not be so dishonest as to give a *réchauffé* of it in these pages.

Thus much, however, I may justifiably say about it:—The concluding words of the title, "and Musketry," were added by Dickens, who cordially detested the French President, and held, as Victor Hugo did, that Louis Napoleon, in December, 1852,

proved himself a perjurer and an assassin, and had all the making in him of a despot as unscrupulous and as merciless as his uncle Napoleon the Great was. Acting upon these convictions, either he, or Mr. W. H. Wills, his managing editor, interpolated in my text some lengthy extracts from evidence given by the great Duke of Wellington before some Royal or Parliamentary Commission, in which evidence the hero of Waterloo had made some very trenchant statements as to the characteristic brutality, and ruthlessness of the French soldiery. I may also record that the cellar in which some English fellow-travellers and I spent the afternoon during which the Rue St. Honoré was being swept with shots and shells by the Government troops, was in the Hotel de Lille et d'Albion.

One noticeable circumstance which I have never forgotten in connection with the *coup d'état* was that when the two days' slaughter were over, Paris not only resumed its accustomed aspect of gaiety and frivolity, but among the majority of the population there seemed to exist a feeling of satisfied relief that the National Assembly had been got rid of and that Louis Napoleon had become the dominant power in France. There had been some terrible shootings down in different parts of the capital, and hundreds of arrests had been made; but the theatres were open, the *cafés* and *restaurants* were crowded; and so tranquil were things in general that the courteous landlord of the hotel did not dissuade a dashing young English stockbroker and myself from making a nocturnal expedition to

the notorious Rue aux Fèves, in the Île de la Cité, between Notre Dame and the Palais de Justice. We wanted to see the *cabaret* of the "Lapin Blanc," immortalised in Eugène Sue's "Mystères de Paris;" and imagining that we should find ourselves in a place infested by brigands, pickpockets, and bad characters of both sexes, we carefully disguised ourselves in shabby blouses and grimed our hands and faces. The visit to the "Lapin Blanc" was a disappointment. There was the *cabaret* sure enough; but there was no "Ogress" behind the counter: a stout landlord occupying the seat of authority. We were quite as unsuccessful in coming across any villainous guests of the "Chourineur," the "Chouette," or the "Maître d'école" type; in short the romance of felony seemed to have altogether disappeared from the Rue aux Fèves and its surroundings. The tap-room of the "Lapin Blanc" was in truth very filthy; the odour of bad tobacco smoke was sickening, and the wine was atrociously bad—that was all. The street itself lingered until 1862, when it was improved off the face of Paris; but not before Gustave Doré had made a vivid sketch of the rotten, tumble-down old place.

Some time in 1852 Charles Kean produced at the Princess's an adaptation to the English stage of the drama of the *Corsican Brothers*, founded on the *Frères Corses* of Alexandre Dumas the Elder. The adapter was Mr. Dion Boucicault, who, as a very young man, had taken the town by storm with a sparkling although somewhat inconsequential comedy called

London Assurance. I cannot remember a period when I did not know Dion Boucicault. He had been, when I was quite a lad, a friend of my mother's; he was one of the readiest, brightest, most versatile men I ever met; a good scholar, and replete with an amazing store of miscellaneous knowledge. He could repeat you, at call, all the inventions of Count Rumford, and tell you the circumstances under which stone will disintegrate. If you would wish to know what Dion Boucicault was physically like, you should consult a little old book, "The Choice and Experimented Receipts in Physics and Chirurgery, collected by the honourable and truly learned Sir Kenelm Digby, Knight, Chancellor to Her Majesty the Queen-Mother." The frontispiece is a portrait of Sir Kenelm himself; and it is the very "fetch" or image of the prolific dramatist of the Victorian era. I have often noticed these curious coincidences of facial expression in persons born in different ages. Douglas Jerrold, for example, was the *ikon* of Montgolfier, the discoverer of the fire-balloon; and the late Montague Williams, Q.C., if he had donned a flowing black periwig, might well have sat to a Sir Peter Lely of our times for a portrait of Charles II.

In 1851 and for some time afterwards Dion Boucicault was "stock-author" at the Princess's; his salary in that capacity did not, I should say, exceed fifteen pounds a week, even if it reached that modest maximum. Among the pieces which he wrote for the Charles Kean management were an adaptation to the English stage

of Casimir Delavigne's *Louis XI.;* a translation of that very gloomy French play *La Dame de St. Tropez,* and an even more lugubrious melodrama called *The Vampire.* The play with which, however, I am at present most particularly concerned was *The Corsican Brothers.* It came as a new dramatic revelation on the public, and was received with rapturous enthusiasm. Charles Kean doubled, of course, the parts of Fabien and Louis de'Franchi. The Château-Renaud was Alfred Wigan; while to my brother Charles was assigned the very small part of the Woodcutter, who only makes his appearance in the fifth act, and chants a kind of *complainte* beginning—

> "Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! my heart is low,
> I've asked Jeannette and she has said me No."

There was some reason why my poor brother should feel somewhat "low" in the region of the heart, both on and off the stage. His relations with Mr. George Ellis, the stage manager, had been for some weeks after the production of our joint pantomime in a very strained condition; and at last smouldering ill-will on both sides broke into open hostilities. Charles Kean, as in duty bound, supported his stage manager; and, although kind-hearted Boucicault did his best to effect a reconciliation, my brother relinquished his position at the Princess's. He was a universal favourite in the theatre, and his secession was deeply regretted. Naturally, I took his part; and, as naturally, remembering that I had some few grievances of my own to resent, I took

what I thought to be a very legitimate revenge by writing on my own account another version of *Les Frères Corses.*

There was at the period no kind of treaty with France touching dramatic copyright; and English playwrights could plunder their French brethren with impunity. The French dramatists were quite at liberty to return the compliment; only, unluckily for them we then very rarely wrote plays that were worth stealing by the intelligent foreigner. Thus, without compunction —so comically are one's notions of ethics influenced by circumstances—I proceeded to purchase a copy of the French drama and turn it into English. I set to work at eight o'clock on a summer's night; and the adaptation was finished by ten the next morning. Then I went to bed, to sleep the sleep of the just—well, the questionably just—but the grass was not allowed to grow under our feet. My brother took the drama, to which we had given the title of *The Corsicans*, over to the old Surrey Theatre, which was then under the management of my old friend Mr. Creswick, the tragedian, and Mr. Richard Shepherd, a transpontine actor of considerable ability. My brother returned at three in the afternoon; he had lunched with Creswick and Shepherd; those worthy managers at once accepted *The Corsicans;* and, moreover, they had offered my brother a twelvemonth's engagement at a handsome salary. *The Corsicans* was within seven days produced at the Surrey, and ran for more than a hundred nights.

I had associated my brother's name with my own as joint-author; but he had nothing to do with turning the French dramatist's prose into English. Our remuneration was not splendid; but it was sufficient. We received twenty-five shillings a night: a sum considered in those days to be prodigious for authors' rights at a minor theatre; and the more munificent was the Surrey management considered to be, inasmuch as Mr. "Dick" Shepherd was said to have been the manager who, about that time, having to discuss the terms for a new piece written by William Brough, began the negotiations with this not very encouraging exordium: "Well, sir; we *have* given as much as five pounds for a farce." At the termination of the run of *The Corsicans* my brother left the stage for ever. He occupied himself a little with dramatic criticism; but gradually he subsided entirely into private life to become the stay and solace of my dear mother, who was growing very old and infirm. He joined her at Brighton and died there late in the 'fifties.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOTUS-EATING.

Etching a Panoramic View of the Great Duke's Funeral—Dean Milman—Loafing—The Reunion and Savage Clubs—*Punchinello*—A Bed of "Backstock"—Driving the Quality out of Hyde Park—The "Leave Us Alone Club"—A Digression—A Visit to Petticoat Lane with Keeley Halswelle—His Method of Draughtsmanship—Henry Vizetelly and the *Illustrated Times*—Edmund Yates—Augustus Mayhew and Charles Bennett—James Hannay—A Disunited Staff—My Time not Wholly Wasted—The Gospel of Hard Work—The *Comic Times* and the *Train*—*London*—English Hotels.

I HAVE now to pass over as briefly as I may, no less than five years of what seems to me something very much of the nature of a Bad Dream. I have already warned my readers that sooner or later I should have to write a chronicle of idleness; and I now unreservedly, yet with no very great shame or remorse, avow that between the end of 1852 and the beginning of the spring of 1856, there did not exist in London town, or out of it, a lazier and more dissolute young loafer than your humble servant. 1852, like the year preceding, had been a sternly industrious one. The great Duke of Wellington died on September the 14th, in that year; and immediately after his decease, Messrs. Ackermann gave me a commission to execute a work far more important than any I had hitherto produced for them. It was to etch on a series of large steel plates a panoramic view of the funeral procession of the great Duke. The many thousands of figures in the *cortége* were first

etched on the plates and subsequently aquatinted. The figures and carriages fell to my share; the horses—of which there were many hundreds—were engraved by Henry Alken, a well-known animal painter, and the son of an even better-known artist in the same branch of art, old "Harry" Alken; and at these plates we worked unremittingly for many weeks.

Plenty of materials had been supplied to us by the authorities of the Horse Guards for the uniforms of the troops which were to take part in the ceremony; and equal courtesy in this respect was shown to us both by the Corporation of the City of London and by the Dean of St. Paul's. I saw the pageant itself, which took place on the 18th November, 1852, from three different points of view. Sir Richard Mayne, the Chief Commissioner of Police, had, in the first instance, granted me a pass "between the lines," so that I was enabled to walk inside the serried ranks of military and police, who were keeping the grounds from Hyde Park Corner to Fleet Street; there my pass enabled me to slip through the lines and reach a certain house, a stationer's shop on the south side, on the first floor of which some friends of mine had secured seats. The procession, I may say, occupied many hours in passing; and when the military part of the pageant had come to an end, I made my way out of the house in Fleet Street, passed between the lines again, and trudged up Ludgate Hill into St. Paul's, and into the metropolitan basilica itself. The funeral service was conducted by the Dean, Henry Hart Milman.

Of that circumstance I have ample warranty, since I find a note of my own on the title-page of Dr. Milman's "Annals of St. Paul's Cathedral," which I bought in 1869, as follows: "I remember to have seen him at the funeral of the great Duke of Wellington at St. Paul's in 1852—a wonderfully ancient-looking, bowed-down man, creeping up the nave at the head of the procession."

We had finished aquatinting the plates about Christmas; when, utterly worn out with hard work, I took a trip to Paris. I was suffering from something else, more serious than fatigue. The fumes of the acids used in biting-in the plates, and the glare of the bright metal itself, when the varnish was removed, had played, as I feared, almost irreparable havoc with my only valid optic; and, for the second time in my life, I was within measurable distance of blindness. Happily, this affliction was spared me, and my sight grew strong enough to cover, during the next thirty years or so, very many thousands of pages with a small and more or less legible handwriting. I never, however, touched an etching needle or a graver again; although, I believe that my kind people at home still keep, in a case specially made for the purpose, all the engraver's tools and chattels which I used.

And now for the chronicles of Lazy-land. I had always *Household Words* as a stand-by. There was the five-guinea fee for every article I wrote; I often got through two in the course of one week, and if, as it more than once happened, I overdrew my account—

I did so on one occasion to the extent of twenty pounds, and, on another, of seventy pounds—Dickens would, after a while, laughingly suggest the sponge should be passed over the slate, and we should begin again. Was this tolerably certain income of between three and four hundred a year a blessing or a bane to me? I have not quite made up my mind on the subject; but of this I am altogether satisfied, that the knowledge that I had only to work four hours to earn five guineas, made me a thoroughly idle dog. My Lazy-land was not altogether situated in London; I was a loafer, and, apparently, an incorrigible one—in Paris, in the north of England, and in Ireland. But wheresoever I went I could find food for my pen, and Dickens never refused an article of my writing. Otherwise, I was a slovenly, careless young ne'er-do-weel. I had certainly some means of subsistence, but as certainly I had no fixed place of residence. I rose and retired to rest when I liked; and I worked when I chose—which was rarely. I was very much like the miller who lived on the banks of the river Dee. Apart from my very few relatives, "I cared for nobody" in particular, "and nobody cared for me."

In this Bad Dream there were a few intervals of brilliancy. Sometimes I would go down to Brighton, where my mother and my brother Charles were now permanently settled, and lead for a week or two a tranquil, cheerful, happy life. I believe even that on one occasion I delivered a lecture, illustrated by magic lantern slides, specially painted for the occasion, on the

coup d'état in December, 1851; my auditors being the pupils of a young ladies' school at Kemp Town. Then I was frequently in Liverpool and Manchester, and throughout the County Palatine generally; but if it could be said that I had any head-quarters at all, they must have been in London and in Paris—roaring, restless, good-for-nothing head-quarters, productive of little but waste of time, dissipation, and consequent deadening of the moral sentiments. If I had any ambition to become anything, that ambition seemed wholly subordinated to the mere wants of the day, and to a liking for vagabondising, sauntering, and treading obviously and disgracefully unprofitable paths. *Sait-on où l'on va?* the old saw has it: Did I know whither I was going? The question was asked me one Sunday afternoon as I was loafing about the Euston Road, my querist being a man with a red head, and clad in rusty black, who kindly presented me with a tract. "Do you know where you are going?" he asked, not by any means unkindly. "No," I made answer; "do you?"

Other episodes of brightness there were to relieve the murky haze of these many nightmares of shiftless "truandism." I was a member of a pleasant club, called the "Reunion," in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, of the members of which gathering, I am afraid, there are very few survivors left; but as regards another club, destined in after years to make a considerable figure in the world, I am absolutely and hopelessly at sea in my chronology—I mean the "Savage Club." Mr. Lionel Brough, the comedian, is, I am told, and

perhaps with justice, regarded as the highest living authority on the genesis of the Savage Club; but he must have been a mere boy when the Savages first began their meetings—I fancy, but I am not quite sure, in the parlour of a tavern in Catherine Street, Strand. I know that I was one of the half-dozen founders of the club; but why we called ourselves The Savages I cannot say. The first annual banquet of the society was at the Crown Tavern, Vinegar Yard—a hostelry which has a history; since according to tradition, the room where we dined had been used for harmonic meetings, at which Edmund Kean often took the chair; and, in later years, the earlier members of the *Punch* staff, together with Henning, and Hine the artist, and Ebenezer Landells the engraver, often met in social converse at the Crown. Then there were festive evenings at the Café de l'Europe, in the Haymarket; and now and again I would turn up at "Paddy Green's," otherwise Evans's, under the piazzas of Covent Garden.

But these, I repeat, were only so many flashes of sparkling and cheery Bohemian life; and they made the darkness of my five years' dream all the denser. The Crimean War broke out; and if I had had the slightest amount of what is ordinarily called "gumption" about me, I should have tried to obtain an engagement as a correspondent, either literary or artistic, of some London or Scottish paper. I made no step whatever in that direction; I was sullenly content with the life of an onager—with "the desolate freedom of the wild ass." I saw, however, the entry of

Napoleon III. into London; and I was in Paris during the Exhibition of 1855, held in the Palais de l'Industrie, in the Champs Élysées. Returning to England, I was for some time pretty closely associated with a little comic periodical called *Punchinello*, which was published in a shadowy passage, between Wellington Street and Catherine Street, at the southern extremity of the two thoroughfares named. This passage was called Exeter Change, and has been long since completely swallowed up by the building of the Gaiety Theatre, and the reconstructed offices of the *Morning Post*.

It is expedient, nevertheless, to recall the memory of its site; since I have more than once read in recent publications that the Exeter Change which I knew was the self-same Change where Mr. Crosse had his menagerie of wild beasts, and where Chunee the elephant went mad and had to be shot to death by a party of the Guards, stationed either at Somerset House, or in the barracks at the Savoy. The old and original Exeter Change was an isolated pile, standing in the Strand itself, just as Holywell Street, to our reproach as a metropolis, still stands. *Punchinello* never rose beyond the status of a weakling, and had not a very prolonged existence. The office, however, in Exeter Change, served my purpose well enough, since I could write there in peace and quiet the articles which I despatched periodically to the office of *Household Words*, close by; and, moreover, in a room above our own office, a gloomy chamber, black and not comely, I frequently slept, neatly constructing a couch and a pillow out of the

back-stock of the publication. I can assure you that when this same back-stock was not of too recent issue, and consequently damp, it formed a by no means uncomfortable bed, and, with a great coat for a counterpane, what more could a young man of five or six and twenty, and of simple tastes, desire?

In the summer of 1855, I was a member, and, indeed, one of the founders, of another little club, the existence of which did not extend beyond a very few weeks. In the month of April, an estimable nobleman, Lord Robert Grosvenor, afterwards Lord Ebury, brought a Bill into Parliament to suppress Sunday-trading; and the measure was specially directed against public-houses and beer-shops. The Bill met with the most violent opposition, and in July it was withdrawn. There was more than one serious riot in Hyde Park, followed by a little window-breaking on the part of the mob. An injudicious Member of Parliament, named Dundas, made the public suggestion that these riotous mobs would very soon be dispersed by the "trail of a six-pounder;" whereupon, the *Times* newspaper, which was altogether against the Sunday Closing Bill, came out with a powerful leading article, in which it derisively alluded to the potential effects of the trail of the six-pounder, concluding with a memorable paragraph to the effect that, were the six-pounder to be trailed through London streets, where would be Mr. Dundas and his following? A highly unpleasant feature in the popular agitation was that on a Sunday afternoon, when the nobility and gentry were taking the air

in their equipages in Hyde Park, as their predecessors had been in the habit of doing for two centuries, they were howled at, and sometimes pelted, by the mob, whose favourite yell was "Go to church!" Whether the nobility and gentry were thus impelled to attend afternoon service I do not know; but the cry certainly drove them out of the Park, and they have never since returned to it, at least, on wheels, on the Sabbath. Society still delights to show its toilettes at Church Parade round about Achilles' statue on Sunday; but on the seventh day the Lady's Mile and the Ring are completely deserted.

The Hyde Park tumults suggested to my friend Thomas Littleton Holt, with whom I still occasionally consorted, that it would be a capital thing to establish, on purely popular and democratic grounds, a place of social gathering, which was to bear the name of "The Leave Us Alone Club." The ideas of the ex-proprietor of the *Iron Times* were always of a grandiose kind; and his original plan was to acquire the lease of a large mansion in Pall-Mall, at the windows of which, on Sunday mornings and afternoons, the members of "The Leave Us Alone Club" could sit—in their shirt sleeves, *bien entendu*—handing to each other glistening and foaming tankards of pewter, and smoking the peaceful yard of clay. They were to have nothing to do with licences or licensing laws; they were to sit under their own vines and their own fig-trees, and who was to make them afraid? They were to eat and drink what they liked, and play all-fours and bumble-

puppy if they chose; and to judges and justices of the peace and inspectors of the police they were simply to say "Leave us Alone." The only obstacle to the immediate realisation of this certainly original scheme was a lack of sufficient capital to acquire the lease of the mansion in Pall-Mall, and furnish it even on the most democratic and economical basis; so the chairman and committee of the embryo club had to draw in their horns a little. In lieu of the palatial edifice in Pall-Mall, we were fain to content ourselves with the first floor over a hairdresser's shop in a narrow part of the Strand, nearly opposite to where is now the office of the *Graphic*.

About July, Lord Robert Grosvenor's Beer Bill having gone to pieces, the "Leave Us Alone Club" simultaneously underwent the process of disintegration. I contend, nevertheless, that although there was much that was *outré*, fantastic, and impracticable in Mr. Holt's plan, we are as much in want of a "Leave Us Alone Club" in 1894, as we were forty years ago. The Liberty and Property Defence League does what it can in counselling people to mind their own business; but its sphere of action is necessarily limited; and to my mind, the "Leave us alone" principle should meet with universal, and not merely local acceptance. Existence to very many of us, especially to those who are more or less public men or women, is becoming absolutely intolerable, owing to the untiring ferocity with which well-meaning disturbers of the peace persist in not leaving us alone. The

food you eat, the potables you drink, the house you live in, the clothes you wear, the books you read, the recreations in which you indulge, are incessantly pried and spied into by people to whom you have not had the honour to be introduced. There are social reformers who would like, if they could, to assume the management of your babies' cradles; and when you pay the debt of Nature, the Funeral Reform Association thrust themselves forward to tell your executors that, on the whole, the Association would prefer that you were buried in a laundry-basket painted pea-green, in lieu of a respectable coffin of wood or lead; and that they entertain a strong objection to mourning coaches, and to the expenditure of any money for flowers at your funeral. This I know is a digression, but my life has been a series of digressions, and so have my books.

One of the oddest circumstances in my life during the nightmare period was, that although I was a tolerably ready writer and a fluent speaker, it was but very seldom indeed that I sought for any literary employment outside the office of *Household Words*. I do remember, indeed, that the editor of an illustrated magazine, long since defunct, and the very name of which I forget, so pressingly asked me to go down to Petticoat Lane and see the humours of the London Ghetto on a Sunday morning, that at length I reluctantly yielded to his request, and made an expedition to the bustling thoroughfare in question, which is now called Middlesex Street. The humours of which I speak

were witnessed from an open window on the first floor of a tavern kept by Mr. "Aby" Belasco, who had formerly been a prominent member of the pugilistic fraternity, and, like most retired prize-fighters, was a singularly quiet and pacific individual. Mr. Zangwill has recently so fully and so graphically described the outer and inner life of Hebrew London at the East End, that it would be impertinent on my part to trench on a domain which he has made so completely and so agreeably his own. My only reason for referring to my trip to Petticoat Lane was that I was accompanied by a friend, a young artist, who was destined in after years to attain great celebrity. This was the late Mr. Keeley Halswelle, Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy. He was an extraordinarily prolific artist; and when I knew him had produced hundreds of sketches of figures and street scenes, which he drew with a firmness and surety of outline than which I have never seen anything gracefuller or more forcible; save perhaps the drawings made by Mr. Reginald Cleaver for the *Daily Graphic*.

Keeley Halswelle frequently practised a process of draughtsmanship which to all appearance has in modern times fallen into almost complete desuetude. He had a block sketch-book composed of so many sheets of Bristol board, pasted together at the edges; and these sheets were thinly veneered with tints of buff, and brown, and light grey, so as to assume the look of so many sheets of ordinary coloured drawing paper. Then he would make his

sketch on the prepared surface, and this being completed, he would put in the high-lights, not with chalk or with Chinese white, but merely by scratching with a sharp penknife through the coloured veneer on the Bristol board. The result was surprisingly effective; he made several Petticoat Lane drawings, and was largely engaged, so I understood, in drawing for the *Illustrated London News*. We were very intimate for some months, but after a while I lost sight of him. He went to Edinburgh, where he found many friends and amply remunerative commissions. Then he travelled to Italy, and painted many figure-pictures in oil. Strange to say, it was not until about 1875 that I lighted upon him again and that we renewed our friendship. As I write these lines, I turn my eyes towards the first sketch for his splendid picture—"Waiting for the Procession"—a scene in the Campagna in Rome, glowing with jewelled colour. To my astonishment, when a few years after I again consorted with him, I found he had bidden a long farewell to figure-subjects, and was devoting his great powers to the production of vigorous landscapes. He died in the fulness of his fame, and he was one of the few men whom I sincerely wished I had known better than I actually did. Otherwise, socially, he was to me, under many aspects, the most mysterious of the many mysterious people that I have come in contact with.

Light breaks again through the *tenebræ* in the case of my first acquaintance with Edmund Yates, whose father and mother my own parent had known

very well during my childhood. In June, 1855, came out a new illustrated weekly newspaper, called the *Illustrated Times*, which was distinctly intended to be a rival, and not an amicable one, to the *Illustrated London News*. One of the proprietors, perhaps the principal one, of the new venture, was Mr. David Bogue, the worthiest of publishers, who, in his time, had had extensive and cordial dealings with such writers as Thackeray, the Mayhews, Albert Smith, Shirley Brooks, and Angus Reach; and such artists as "Phiz" and John Leech. The editor and part proprietor of the *Illustrated Times* was the late Mr. Henry Vizetelly, who in youth had been a distinguished engraver on wood. Subsequently he did a little in the way of literature; and afterwards, he and his brother James carried on an extensive business as art and general publishers and printers, whose offices were in Peterborough Court: a London nook or corner long since swallowed up by the stately offices of the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper. The firm of Vizetelly Brothers had become extinct in 1855, and Henry Vizetelly devoted all his energy to the new journal. I knew him intimately during very many years of his busy, industrious, and not very fortunate life. He ought to have made a large fortune, since he was not only a man of considerable literary attainments and of long journalistic experience, but he was also the possessor of the keenest business faculty imaginable. There are, however, always a certain number of people in the world who *cannot* get on, and Henry Vizetelly was one of

them. His greatest misfortune did not come to him until almost the close of a resolutely industrious and generally useful life. Of the *Illustrated Times* he was a most competent editor.

To this journal, which soon attained a very large circulation, Edmund Yates, then a dashing young clerk in the Secretary's department of the Post Office, and who was scarcely twenty-five years of age, contributed a weekly column of *persiflage* under the title of "The Lounger at the Clubs." He was a member of the Garrick and the Fielding—two excellent centres of town gossip of the literary, dramatic, legal, sporting, and Household Brigade world. Other members of the staff were Robert Brough, Frederick Greenwood—subsequently the first editor of the *Pall-Mall Gazette*, which he left to found the *St. James's Gazette*—Sutherland Edwards, Augustus Mayhew, Edward Draper, an old Westminster boy, a highly respectable solicitor and not a Bohemian, although he occasionally looked in at the Kaiserhof at Prague, and partook of a beaker of Pilsener with the genuine Bohemians. Edward Draper's contribution was a column of legal items, entitled, "Law and Crime;" Augustus Mayhew, who fulfilled the duties of home special correspondent, was altogether "at home" in his breezy, mercurial way when describing fancy-fairs at the Crystal Palace, pigeon matches, botanic garden fêtes, and so forth.

When the notorious William Palmer was arrested for the murder at Rugeley, the genial Augustus was sent down into Staffordshire to pick up as much information

as he possibly could about the crime, the criminal, and his victim. He was accompanied as a special artist by Charles H. Bennett, who had been at one time a subordinate member of the *Punch* staff. He afterwards became known by numerous humorous works of the artistic kind: especially by a series of illustrations of the Darwinian theory of evolution; and he afterwards made a large number of designs of very subtle character for an edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress," edited by Charles Kingsley. Both the special correspondent and his graphic coadjutor were essentially funny fellows, droll dogs, merry men, mad wags, or whatever you may please to call them from a facetious point of view; and rarely, I should say, has an altogether ghastly and repulsive history been narrated by pen and pencil in such a whimsically droll manner as the Rugeley murder was by 'Gus Mayhew and C. H. Bennett. They managed to get fun out of everything:—Palmer's betting book, John Parson Cook's medicine bottles, and the overturning of the post-chaise in which the police officers were conveying the entrails of the murdered man for chemical analysis. This odd expedition was wound up by a master-stroke. Having apparently exhausted all the criminal items at his command, Augustus gave a minute description of the little country inn where the pair had stayed. The coffee-room and its frequenters were drolly delineated by Bennett; and Mayhew, after expressing his regret that custom at the inn had somewhat suffered from the murder, concluded by predicting

that the only manner in which the fortunes of the house could be retrieved would be the immediate arrival of a large number of travellers, "all with plenty of luggage;" and then Bennett proceeded to draw a group of ideal travellers and their equally imaginary belongings.

The world, to poor Charles Bennett, was not always a funny one. We were talking one day about human happiness and human misery. "I have had my share of both," quietly remarked the artist. "When I was quite a young man I had chambers in Lyons' Inn. I had married very early; and I had a child born; a child that died, the 'sack' from *Punch,* and the brokers in, all on the same day." Often and often has that brief but comprehensive picture of wretchedness recurred to me, and then my thoughts have turned to the old story of the little children in the street pointing at Dante Alighieri, as he stalked moodily along, and whispering to themselves, "There goes the man who has seen Hell!"

A notable member of the *Illustrated Times* staff was James Hannay, a Scotchman of good lineage, and a cousin, I take it, of the present popular police-magistrate. James Hannay's father was a banker north of the Tweed; and James himself entered life as a midshipman in the Royal Navy, which service, however, he left before attaining commission rank. I do not think, either, that he had a University degree, but he was a very fluent Latinist; in his confidential moments he was wont to say that he knew "about as

much Greek as a bishop did;" and he had accumulated a rich store of knowledge of literature in general. He was a fluent, nervous, and incisive writer; and was gifted, moreover, with strong sarcastic powers, which he did his best to cultivate and to develop—not in the main with the result of increasing thereby his circle of friends. From time to time the members of the staff used to write essays on the most prominent men of letters of the age. Dickens fell to my share; and naturally I said all the good things that I could think of, and as I firmly believed to be true, about my master in letters. Albert Smith was allotted to Edmund Yates. Hannay dealt with Thackeray, who admired him greatly, and was personally fond of him; and I do not think that the illustrious author of "Vanity Fair" could have paid a brighter compliment to Hannay's profound knowledge of early eighteenth-century literature than when he engaged him to write the notes for "The English Humourists."

Sad to say, Mr. Vizetelly's staff were not very fond of one another. There was a good deal of genuine admiration among us for each other's capacity; but "chums" we certainly were not. There were two camps into which we were divided, and the camps were equally literary and political. Hannay was a staunch Conservative, and, although of no university, consorted habitually with young Oxford and Cambridge men. Vizetelly, Augustus Mayhew, and I were the fiercest of Radicals; and Robert Brough was an even more

irreconcilable democratic Republican; and not one of us had ever studied at any English public school or university. In this pleasant state of things it naturally came about that we were very much given to abusing each other in print in ephemeral publications outside the sphere of the *Illustrated Times*. I, as yet, had no channel to vent my rancour, since I only wrote for *Household Words*, and occasionally for the *Illustrated Times*; but Hannay had plenty of means for saying his say about "the confounded Radicals," particularly Brough and myself; and in the pages of some short-lived magazine to which he was a contributor, I was highly amused by reading one day the following really smart epigram:—

> "Easy to see why S. and B.
> Dislike the University.
> Easy to see why B. and S.
> Dislike cold water little less.
> As by their works you know their creed,
> That those who write should never read,
> Their faces show they think it bosh
> That those who write should ever wash."

Whether Hannay was really the author of this bright little *morceau* I am unaware, and it does not really matter at this time of day to know; but at all events it emanated from some one of the academic clique with which he was so closely connected. He admitted, however, the authorship of a scathing summary of the merits of the three little essays on famous men of letters to which I have drawn attention. His appreciation was terse; it ran simply thus:

"Thackeray. By a Scholar.
Dickens. By a Dickensian.
Albert Smith. By an Ape."

Edmund was the "ape;" but he, too, was not at all deficient in satiric *verve;* and he paid back Hannay in his own coin, and with interest, on a good many occasions.

The subsequent career of James Hannay was brilliant, but could scarcely be called fortunate. He wrote a number of admirable essays in the *Quarterly Review*, and some valuable lectures on "Satire and Satirists." He was the author of at least two spirited novels of adventure—"Singleton Fontenoy" and "Eustace Conyers"—the last of which was translated into German. In 1857 he stood in the Conservative interest for the Dumfries burghs, but was defeated by the former Member, Mr. Ewart. In 1860 he became editor of the *Edinburgh Courant*, in which he wrote scores upon scores of trenchant, witty, and vivacious leading articles, many of which would well bear republication. He was highly popular in the literary society of modern Athens; but Hannay was rather too fond of controversy, and was occasionally, when disputing with his opponents, something of a *mauvais coucheur;* thus he did not get on very well with the Scottish clergy, whom he accused of being sadly deficient in classical learning.

He resigned his editorial chair in 1854, and was heartily welcomed back to London by his old friends and colleagues. In 1868 he was appointed, through

the interest of the late Earl of Derby, who had a high appreciation of his talents—an appreciation which was shared by Carlyle—to the post of British Consul at Barcelona, and in that Catalonian city, in 1873, poor James Hannay died. He was barely forty-six years of age. He ought to have survived me. He ought to have gone into Parliament; and he would have made, I think, as great a mark there as John Morley has done; since Hannay was a most fluent, polished, and convincing speaker, with a rare store of illustrations always at his command. On the whole, I think that men of letters of repute condemn themselves to a barren and cheerless exile when they accept the morsel of official cat's-meat which is sometimes flung to them in the shape of a consulate abroad. Their salary only just suffices to enable them to support themselves in due official respectability; but although they may not entirely abandon their connection with literature, they usually work less than they did before their elevation to a quasi-diplomatic post; and the world, which is about the most ungrateful of all possible worlds, is apt more or less to forget them.

The last member of the staff of the *Illustrated Times* of whom a few words may be said is your humble servant. Somehow or another, Henry Vizetelly discovered that the roving, picaroon life that I had been living for the last four or five years, combined with the number and variety of the articles which I had written in *Household Words*, had been gradually qualifying me for the craft of journalism in right serious earnest.

And now, perhaps, you will be able to understand why it is that in the winter of my life I can think of my ultra-Bohemian days without remorse and without shame. I had learned, albeit half unconsciously, the trade of a newspaper-writer, even as I had previously learned the trade of an engraver. I had not, to my knowledge, done anybody any harm; and, so far as my anonymous contributions to *Household Words* were concerned, I had striven to do as much good as it lay within my limited powers to accomplish. No; I am not sorry, and I am not ashamed, since in the winter of my life I find myself, through the mercy of Providence, sitting in my own house at Brighton, surrounded by books and pictures and *bric-à-brac*.

I have said that when the Crimean War broke out I had stupidly refrained from making any attempt to procure an appointment as correspondent of some London newspaper. A little special correspondence, indeed, I did accomplish in connection with the campaign in the Tauric Chersonese, but without quitting the shores of my native country. The British Government was, throughout the war, sorely pressed for food for powder; and among the auxiliaries whom it was thought expedient to organise was a German Legion. These solid, sturdy mercenaries, enlisted from every quarter of the Fatherland, were landed at Dover, and formed into a camp at Shorncliffe; and Vizetelly sent me down to write a description of a review of the Legion by the Duke of Cambridge. The General commanding the Legion was a certain Baron von Stutterheim.

I wrote two or three columns about the review, and made half-a-dozen sketches of divers episodes of the occasion. The figure sketches were good enough to be engraved at once, but the attempts at landscape were so bad that they had to be drawn on the wood by Birket Foster.

A little later Edmund Yates was appointed editor of a weekly illustrated periodical of avowedly facetious character, called the *Comic Times;* and it struck me that it might be advantageous to all parties if I called on Mr. Yates and had a talk with him about the desirability of my contributing to the new journal. I think that I had met him two or three times in the early days of the *Illustrated Times,* but I had only the slightest personal acquaintance with him. I went one evening to the house which he then occupied in Doughty Street, Gray's Inn Road. Scores of my literary and journalistic friends seem to have lived, at some period or another, in Doughty Street. Mr. Yates received me with great affability: laughingly observing that he had thought of writing to me as a possible contributor to the *Comic Times,* but that Dickens had told him that there was not much chance of my joining his staff, as *Household Words* was quite willing to take all that I could write, and could not always get enough copy out of me.

So you see that the bad dream was slowly clearing away, that the nightmare years were coming to an end, and that there was beginning to shine around me a very bright light, by means of which I was able to read

a precept that for a very long time had been almost invisible to me—that it was an excellent thing for a man who had any knowledge or any capacity in him to work many hours for six days in every week; and that the harder, more sedulously and more faithfully he worked the better it would be for his body's and his soul's health. I suppose there is such a thing as overwork; I suppose that our mental faculties may sometimes be impaired by constant study or by almost incessant intellectual labour; but I do, once for all, declare that continuous hard work never did me any harm, and that for the last thirty-seven years—when I have not been prostrated by sickness—a day's idleness has always made me uncomfortable, and a week's idleness miserable.

Edmund Yates and I speedily became fast friends; and that friendship continued until the period of his lamented decease. After the stoppage—which was not very long delayed—of the *Comic Times*, Edmund, with a small collected band of his literary and artistic associates, of whom I was one, formed themselves into a kind of syndicate for the purpose of starting a monthly magazine, to be called *The Train*. Of that magazine he has himself told the story so exhaustively and so amusingly that it is needless for me to say anything about it, save in the briefest and most incidental manner. First, however, I must go back a little, and mention that, at the very beginning of the Crimean War—the precise time was, I think, when the British expeditionary force had proceeded no further than Gallipoli

—I had myself become the editor of a weekly periodical called *London.* I drew the frontispiece myself, by means of one of the earliest of the "processes," the excessive multiplication of which is now threatening to bring wholesale ruin on the art of wood-cutting and engraving on metal. The process was called "glyphography," and my frontispiece represented the portico of a temple, decorated with all kinds of symbolic allusions to metropolitan matters, and flanked on either side by a gigantic Beefeater.

London was financed by a certain Peter Morison, who was running an establishment called the Bank of Deposit, in St. Margaret's Place, Trafalgar Square. Five per cent. was the interest generously promised by Peter Morison on cash deposits, large or small, withdrawable at six months' notice; and a good many thousands of pounds, I believe, were placed by a confiding public in Peter's always open hand. After a while there grew up in City circles a disagreeable impression that the Bank of Deposit was rather a "fishy" concern; and this impression soon developed into a strong conviction that Peter himself was not altogether an immaculate financier. About his monetary operations I knew absolutely nothing; but I liked the man, who was of a frank, cheery, liberal, and genial disposition. He paid me well; and I gave him good worth for his money. *London* was not a successful periodical; and after a few weeks it preceded the Bank of Deposit in going to what is popularly known as "smash." I never saw Peter Morison again; but I

always preserved a kindly feeling for him, and could not help thinking that he was much more sinned against than sinning; and on one occasion, after I had joined for good and all the profession of journalism, and was asked to write an article, in which Peter's financial modes and manners were to be smartly held up to censure, I firmly declined to pen one anonymous word against a man of whose business practices I had had not the slightest cognisance, but who had always treated me in a kind and honourable way.

Before parting with the unlucky Peter I have to draw attention to a slightly curious circumstance. In 1854 I had written for Dickens a series of papers—being practically an answer to a pamphlet by Albert Smith—called "The Great Hotel Question," dealing with the then very much vexed question of English hotels, their discomfort, their exorbitant charges, their bad *cuisine*, and their fiery and costly wines. I had, myself, an open mind in the matter; and in some instances I was inclined to agree with Albert as to the vast superiority of continental hotels over our own. As yet my travels had been limited. I knew Paris well, but beyond my familiarity with the gay city I had only been to Brussels, to Aix-la-Chapelle, and to Cologne; whereas the author of the "Great Hotel Nuisance" had travelled extensively, not only in France and Belgium, but in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy.

Somehow or another it occurred to me to formulate a project for an English hotel, on a very magnificent scale, to be built by a joint-stock company, on the

lines of the then new Grand Hotel in Paris. There was to be a ladies' coffee-room, a daily *table d'hôte*, and in particular, a fixed scale of charges for attendance — all boons which were then lacking to British hostelries. I wrote an elaborate prospectus for the formation of such a company, and the foundation of such an hotel; and this document I laid before Peter Morison. He read it attentively, and approved generally of its tenour; but his ultimate reply was unfavourable. "I have not got enough capital myself," he said, "to start it on my own account; and as for a joint-stock company, why, my dear fellow, every one of the directors, and the shareholders too, would be liable to be arrested any morning for ten thousand pounds for a butcher's bill, or five thousand pounds for a milk score." This, you will bear in mind, was 1854. In 1855 there was passed an Act for limiting the liability of joint-stock companies. I was just one year too soon in formulating my scheme for an English Grand Hotel; and I may hint that throughout my career I have generally been a little too early or a little too late in the exposition of my ideas on most subjects.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MY FIRST "JOURNEY DUE NORTH."

A Mysterious Travelling Companion—Copenhagen—Fascinating Offers of Alcoholic Refreshment—Borrowing a Device of Mazzini's—Installed at St. Petersburg—Russian Dishes—The Knout—A Censor and His Methods—A Droll *Table d'Hôte*—Recollections of Napoleon the Great—A Female Corporal—Geneviève Ward—A Ball at the American Legation—About Cigars—The Russian Boyard—The *Moujik*—A Lineal Descendant of Ginghis Khan—Back at Brussels—Short Commons.

Edmund Yates was never, to my knowledge, a member of the Savage Club; but he was president of a little society which had no settled place of meeting, but was convened from week to week in a coffee-room at some hotel or other. Its name was appropriate enough, being the "Trainband"; and its members were nearly all of them writers or artists, who were engaged on the *Illustrated Times* or had been connected with the short-lived *Comic Times*. The story of the *Train*, a shilling monthly magazine, which emanated from the "Trainband," has been related at length by Edmund in his "Reminiscences." It made its first appearance in January, 1856; but I was not in England at the time: I was in Paris, and I remained in the Gay City until the close of the Crimean War. The cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and her French ally and Russia, proved to be the turning-point in my career. I wrote to Dickens a long letter saying that, now that the war was

over, it seemed to me that the British reading public would like to know something about Russia itself, its manners, and social usages; and I proposed that he should send me to St. Petersburg and Moscow, in order that I should write a series of descriptive essays touching Muscovy and the Muscovites, in the pages of *Household Words*.

He wrote me in return, fully and warmly, and very gladly accepted my offer. His letter was, in parts, truly touching, and I should dearly like to reproduce it here; but I regret to say that I lost it. However, I delayed not in returning to England to make arrangements for my journey. It was lovely spring weather, and Mr. Wills proposed that I should avail myself of a steamer from Hull, or some other seaport in the north of England, and travel direct to Cronstadt by sea; but that arrangement did not in anywise suit my inclination. I had only had, as yet, the merest glimpse of Germany; so I elected to proceed by way of Berlin; and thence, always by land, to St. Petersburg: drawing, of course, some *Household Words* pictures by the way. Dickens consented that I should take this route; so, one April evening, having obtained a Foreign Office passport, a supply of ready cash, and a letter of credit on Messrs. Stieglitz, the well-known bankers of St. Petersburg, I took my departure from London Bridge terminus for Dover and Calais; and, in due time, reached Berlin, where I sojourned for a few days, at the then very favourite resort for travellers, the Hôtel de Russie, by the Schloss Brücke. My travelling companion was a

gentleman who, it turned out afterwards, I had frequently seen in his public capacity, but of whose identity when I met him, wrapt up in a heavy pelisse, and with a travelling-cap drawn down over his eyes, I had not the remotest idea. The railway-carriage, again, was badly lit; and besides, I always had a very defective memory for faces.

My travelling companion spoke English with perfect fluency, but with a strong French accent. He told me, between Calais and Brussels, and Brussels and the Prussian capital, a tissue of most astonishing stories about the people he had known, and the things which he had done. Such extraordinary rhodomontade I had seldom listened to; but he was evidently a very good fellow; so I let him "blow," as the Australians phrase it, as long as he liked, without interrupting him. Now and again I asked myself, mentally, who the man could be; but I declare for the life of me I could not determine who or what he was. It was not until the ensuing September that I sent any manuscript to *Household Words;* but in one of my earliest papers about the North, I gave that which I thought and meant to be an altogether good-natured, although somewhat bantering, description of my unknown friend in the fur pelisse and the travelling-cap which came down over his nose.

Years sped by. The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, was under the management of the late Mr. Chatterton; and a favourite member of his company was my esteemed friend, the talented dramatic artist Miss

Geneviève Ward. "How is it," she asked me one day, "that poor, old, widowed Madame Jullien, who is housekeeper at the theatre, hates you so?" "Hates me?" I exclaimed in amazement. "Why I have never written an unkind word against Jullien in my life. I always admired his talent and his pluck, and have always tried to say a kind word for him." It was now Miss Ward's turn to be astonished. "You never said an unkind word about him?" she repeated. "Do you forget your cruel caricature of him in *Household Words?*" My travelling companion had been no other than the renowned Jullien, composer of the "Row Polka," the "Irish Quadrilles," and conductor of I know not how many hundreds or thousands of Promenade Concerts. My memory had played me an unaccountable trick; for as I have elsewhere noted, I had painted in 1850 a portrait of the composer of the "Row Polka" on the staircase at Gore House.

I found it was much more difficult than I had imagined to make my way by land from Berlin to St. Petersburg. I was advised by the landlord of the Hôtel de Russie to purchase a small travelling-carriage, which I could sell again on arriving at the Russian frontier, where I should find a regular service of posting-carriages. Then, again, he remarked, if I liked to wait for a fortnight or so, a Queen's Messenger might be starting from Berlin, bound for the North, and for a consideration I might obtain a seat in his carriage. There was no hurry, and I concluded to wait; but as it did not take long to exhaust the lions of Berlin, and

time began to hang heavy on my hands, I ran down by rail to Swinemünde, in Pomerania, whence I crossed to Copenhagen, and revelled for three whole days in the splendid display of plastic art in the Thorwaldsen Museum. I did not know anybody in the Danish capital; but I met a very friendly gentleman at the hotel *table d'hôte*, who spoke English perfectly, and who told me that he hoped that the next time I came to the capital of Denmark I would pay him a visit; and, as an additional incitement to accept his proffered hospitality, he mentioned that he had fifteen kinds of brandy in his cellar.

It chanced that nearly twenty years afterwards I had an equally tempting offer of alcoholic refreshment. Once a year, on the feast or anniversary of the death of St. Thomas à Becket, a large number of Roman Catholic ladies and gentlemen make a pilgrimage to Canterbury, "the Shrine of the Holy Blissful Martyr there to seek." On one occasion I joined, for journalistic purposes, the modern Canterbury Pilgrims; but I did not repair to the venerable Kentish cathedral on horseback, as you behold the palmers, male and female, in Stothard's picture. I merely availed myself of the facilities offered by the South-Eastern Railway; and the Knight and the Squire, the Nun's Priest, and the Wife of Bath, the Cook, the Shipman, and myself made up a very snug little party in a first-class carriage; and we told stories all the way. Needless to hint that our Canterbury Tales were not Chaucerian either in matter or in manner; still they

made us laugh consumedly; and a lengthened experience of a world which it is ungratefully and hypocritically wicked to call a Vale of Tears, has long fixed in my mind the conviction that one of the secrets of long life is to laugh as often and as heartily as ever you possibly can. One of my fellow-pilgrims—I think it was the Knight—was no great story-teller; but he was an exemplary laugher. I had just come home from Spain; and he was so delighted with some merry *cosas de España* which I related, that shortly after we had left Croydon he whispered to me: "Sir, I have read several of your books; I am a wine merchant, *and I should very much like to send you a case of sparkling brandy.*" Sparkling brandy! Surely that must have been the nectar of the gods on old Olympus. I gave him my address; but somehow or another the case of effervescing brandy never came to hand.

From Swinemünde I went on to Stettin, a quaint old Pomeranian seaport, very comfortable, but very dull; and the ice in the Baltic being by this time completely broken up and the weather perfect, I thought that I might as well proceed to St. Petersburg, or rather Cronstadt, by sea. How I accomplished this not very adventurous voyage I have related in a book called "A Journey Due North." I remained in St. Petersburg and its vicinity from mid-April until mid-September; and I can, without exaggeration, say that I have rarely in the whole course of my life passed five such months of unmingled happiness as I did in the metropolis of his Tsarish Majesty Alexander

Nicolaivitch II. I was still young; I was in first-rate health; I had a sufficiency of cash, and had bidden that which I hoped was to be a lasting farewell to Bohemia and its nightmares. I set to work very hard at learning Russian; but I was not expected to forward any copy to *Household Words* until I had left Russia. The war was over; still, when I started from England, a general and uneasy impression existed that our late foes did not entertain any very amicable feelings towards John Bull, and that dark political intrigues and machinations would be henceforward the weapons with which Prince Gortschakoff would fight England.

The Russian Government, again, were accused of the systematic and continuous opening of letters despatched by or addressed to foreigners resident in Russia; and sharing as I did in 1856 in this belief, it is amusing to remember in 1894 that for some years past a niece of mine has been living in the Tsar's dominions, and that at present her husband holds an appointment in the General Post Office, St. Petersburg. In 1856, being reluctant to give any trouble to the *Cabinet Noir* of the Petropolitan General Post Office, I did not, in the course of five months, write as many as a dozen letters home; and, as these communications were of a strictly private and domestic character, I do not suppose that the Bureau of Secret Police derived much—if they derived any benefit at all from the perusal of my few and far-between epistles. That they *were* opened, I had, nevertheless, reason

to know. Before leaving England, I had agreed with my brother Charles at Brighton that we should place in our letters a single human hair; and neither in the letters which he sent me, nor in those which I received from him, was the solitary hair ever discovered.

The device was none of my own. It was invented, I believe, by Giuseppe Mazzini, who made use of it at a period when he began to suspect that the correspondence which he received from abroad was opened at the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, by the authority of Sir James Graham, then Home Secretary; the contents being communicated to the Neapolitan Minister in London. This scandalous breach of good faith earned for Sir James Graham the opprobrious sobriquet, first conferred by *Punch*, of "Peel's Dirty Little Boy." The epithet must have been the more galling since the letter-opening Home Secretary was sartorially considered one of the best-dressed personages in England, and in private life was a high-bred and high-minded gentleman. What a book it would make—"The Dirtiness of Politics!"

Acting under the advice of a fellow-passenger on board the steamer, I decided to fix my quarters at an hotel called the Hôtel Heyde, in the suburban island of Vacili Ostrof. I am aware that I am guilty of a pleonasm in so calling it, since the Russian word *Ostrov* means island; but then, do not the Spaniards speak of "El Puente de Alcantara," the bridge of the bridge?—*cantara* meaning, in Arabic, a bridge. The Hôtel Heyde was an establishment almost

exclusively conducted on Germanic lines. The waiters and chambermaids were all Teutons, and consequently all scrupulously honest; and only the porters and scrubbers and scullions were of the *moujik* or Muscovite peasant class. The *cuisine*, too, was mainly of the Fatherland pattern—plenty of boiled beef and vegetables, plenty of sauerkraut, and raw-smoked salmon and ham; plenty of Rhine wines, and strong Bavarian and less potent Vienna beer; and the weather being now delightfully warm, plenty of *maitrank*, a beverage with the ingredients of which I am not fully acquainted, but which seems to me to come nearer the idea of the nectar of the gods than the Canterbury Pilgrim's sparkling brandy might have done, had I been privileged to taste it. A few typical Russian dishes made, it is true, their appearance at luncheon and dinner. To begin with, there were *pirogues*, which may be defined as small oval pies, or rather puffs, inside which was, not jam, but highly flavoured mincemeat. These served to stay your stomach while they were bringing you your meal, and formed, moreover, an agreeable interlude between the courses. Then there was invariably *stchi* on hand; it is the national soup, and is partaken of by rich and poor alike. The *moujik* eats it when he has sufficient kopecks to purchase it; and it is served at the coronation banquets of the Tsars. It is simply a soup made of beef-broth and cabbage, to which are added small square blocks of boiled beef. Persons able to afford it supplement this really toothsome dish with a few

spoonfuls of sour cream. This, however, is not purely Russian. A sort of flummery of thickened and curdled milk is used in Germany; but the Russian sour cream more closely resembles the Turkish *yaourt*, which is so lustily cried in spring-time by the itinerant street-vendors of Stamboul. Very small spring chickens fried in batter, and which you crunched, bones and all, likewise made a frequent appearance in Heyde's bill of fare; but I was not initiated as yet into the higher mysteries of the Muscovite, and especially the Tartar, kitchen, which are imparted at certain patrician restaurants in the two capitals of the Empire.

It was early in the evening when I reached Heyde's, and was accommodated with a large and extremely uncomfortable bedroom on the third floor. The only thing to which I can compare the proportions of the grotesquely exiguous bed with the apartment in which it stood is an oyster at the bottom of a barge. However, I got a sufficient amount of sleep out of it; and the first things which I saw when I looked out of one of the windows—there were five—in my room were six enormous birch-rods lying all of a row on the leads beneath. "Ah!" I mentally exclaimed; "I am in Despotic Russia, the land of the rod, the cat-o'-six-tails—not nine—and the knout." Before I had finished dressing, perhaps, I should hear the shrieks, if I did not actually witness the anguish, of wretched wood-choppers and drudges and kitchen-maids who were being scourged by the lictor of the hotel. Nothing whatever of the kind took place.

Three sturdy *moujiks*, it is true, made their appearance, with their caftans off and their red cotton shirt-sleeves tucked up; but they brought with them, not a group of pale and trembling delinquent domestics, but sundry coats and pelisses—my own among the number—which, extending them to a line stretched between two uprights, they proceeded to castigate mercilessly with the big birch-rods, in order to get the dust out of the garments.

It must be remembered that when I first went to Russia slavery still existed, and there were millions of serfs in the empire. The punishment of the knout was still publicly inflicted, as it was in John Howard's time, in a small square at the summit of the Nevskoi Prospekt; but, so far as I am aware, nobody was knouted during my stay in St. Petersburg. In remote provincial districts, I have heard of noble landowners, of both sexes, who beat their servants, or caused them to be beaten, very barbarously; but in St. Petersburg or Moscow it was with the extremest rarity that the proprietor of a serf ever struck a servant, male or female. If the domestic was exceptionally troublesome, he or she was "sent to the police" with a missive, politely requesting the police master to give the bearer so many lashes with the rod, or with the *pleit* or whip.

In "Uncle Tom's Cabin" the widowed Marie St. Clair sends her quadroon slave, Rosa, to the barracoon to be whipped by a professional scourger; and I remember, about 1865, having in London a lady amanuensis—she was a daughter of Mrs. Cornwall

Barron Wilson, a well-known minor poetess, and editor of the "Belle Assemblée"—who had been a governess in a noble family at St. Petersburg during the Crimean war; and who told me that when the news of the first bombardment of Sebastopol arrived in the capital, the servants told such alarming stories of a miraculous appearance of St. Alexander Nevskoi to the Tsar Nicolas, and got, besides, so excessively tipsy on *vodka*, that at least half of them were packed off to the police-station of the quarter to be thrashed into reason and sobriety. I heard, in 1856, a very shocking story of a French milliner in business at Moscow, who, having a spite against one of her work-girls, who was a serf whom she had hired, sent the poor creature to the police-station, where she was cruelly flogged; but this incident I have narrated in some detail in my "Journey Due North." As for the knout, that torture was, not long after my departure, formally abolished by decree of the Tsar Alexander; although, according to some recent travellers, the horrible infliction has been revived at Saghalien and other Russian convict settlements.

There were many more Russians than Germans among what I may term the "day-boarders" at the Hôtel Heyde. Most of the sleeping-apartments were occupied by German commercial travellers and super-cargoes who had run up from Cronstadt; but they were swamped at the *table d'hôte* and in the billiard room by a multitude of Russian military officers and *employés* in the many Government offices at Vacili

Ostrov. Now, a *Tchinovnik*, or Russian civil servant, wears a uniform, and has a relatively military rank, as British army surgeons now have. Thus our dinner-table presented every evening the aspect of a military mess on an amazingly large scale. The warriors were not "swells"—they belonged to the Line, not to the Guard; and though all of them spoke German, comparatively few of their number could converse in French. They were, however, scrupulously polite to me; though I spoke German, as I speak it now, execrably. Among the company at Heyde's, I recall to mind a stout, clean-shaven, grey-headed old gentleman, who wore gold-rimmed spectacles, and who fulfilled the important functions of one of the censors of the foreign Press. He had never, so I understood, crossed the frontier of his native country; but he spoke English and French capitally: the last with the purest of accents. We grew quite intimate; and he kindly explained his methods of obliterating what he considered to be objectionable passages in the non-Russian newspapers which came under his purview.

He employed for this purpose two processes; one was rubbing out, and another was blocking out the parlous matter. In cases where the paper—say the *Times* or the *Saturday Review*—was of stout quality, he merely erased the offending lines by means of gentle friction with an agate stylus, or a dog's-tooth set in a holder, and a little water; but when the paper was comparatively thin, as in the instance of the foreign editions of the illustrated papers, the censor blocked

out the condemned matter by repeated dabs with a stamp endued with printer's ink. Of course he only made the obliterations as patterns, which were to be followed by his subordinates. I remember his showing me a copy of the *Illustrated London News*, containing an engraving of a party of Russian soldiers, wrapped in their great-coats, crouching round a bivouac fire, and chanting one of their plaintive national songs. Of the six lines of explanatory letterpress at the foot of the picture, four were blocked out. It is extremely droll to read, as I have recently done, that in the reading-room of at least one provincial Free Library the Russian blocking-out system has been applied to the Sporting Intelligence in the newspapers on hand; lest, so I suppose, the morals of the readers should be irretrievably ruined by learning the state of the odds with regard to Brother to Cauliflower, or that Dartmoor had been scratched for the Newgate Cup.

I only remained four days at the Hôtel Heyde. I did not know a single soul in St. Petersburg. No British Ambassador had as yet been accredited to the Court of Russia; but among my very few letters of introduction was one that Robert Brough had given me to an American lady named Ward, who, with her grown-up son and daughter, were living at a French *pension*, the Maison Martius, in the Nevskoi Prospekt—the Regent Street of St. Petersburg, as the Bolschoi Morskaia is its Pall Mall. I duly called, the day after my arrival, on Mrs. Ward, and was most

courteously received by her and her family. Next day young Mr. Ward returned my visit. I regret to say that he did not at all approve of the Hôtel Heyde, which, in fact, he characterised as "a confounded hole," and very dear—which I am afraid it was—adding that I should do much better by coming over to the other side of the Neva, and becoming a *pensionnaire* at a stipulated monthly fare at the Maison Martius, where he assured me that there was an excellent *cuisine*—exclusively French, and "no beastly Russian messes"—scrupulously clean accommodation, and "lots of fun" into the bargain. He and his mother and sister, he continued, took their meals in their own private room; but I should find plenty of amusement at the *table d'hôte*, and could pass the evening with his family when I felt so inclined.

So I went over the water to the Maison Martius. The tariff, for what was then the most expensive city in the world, was pleasingly moderate. I do not think that, for board and lodging, and a sufficiency of sound French *vin ordinaire*, I paid more than sixteen pounds a month, and my allowance *per mensem* from *Household Words* being forty pounds, I had plenty of money to spare for amusements and dress. Looking at how desperately poverty-stricken I had usually been for the preceding six years—poverty simply due to the circumstance that I generally spent my money immediately I got it—I deemed myself, with an income of five hundred a year, a counterpart of the Fortunate Youth. In reality I was luckier than he; seeing that the

so-called Fortunate Youth, who enjoyed some brief notorieties in the early 'twenties, was an impudent liar and impostor, without a shilling of his own in the world.

A droller *table d'hôte* than that at the Maison Martius I never saw. We used to sit down, some twenty in number, to the *déjeuner à la fourchette* and to dinner; and with one exception—myself—the company were all French; and none of them knew a word of English. Two of the boarders were, although of French extraction, Russian subjects. They were husband and wife—Monsieur, short and plump, about seventy; Madame, tall and osseous, perhaps a year or two younger. They had invaded Russia with Napoleon's Grand Army in 1812, had seen the burning of Moscow, had been taken prisoners at the Beresina; and after a brief sojourn in Siberia, to which inhospitable regions the Tsar Alexander I. despatched his French captives, had chosen, at the Peace of 1814, to remain in Russia, which they had never since left. They had gained a modest competence; he as a teacher of French and of drawing; she as a milliner. They seemed perfectly happy. They read the French papers regularly; went to the French theatre; touched nothing but French dishes, and in the evening played at loto or bezique. Why should they have troubled themselves about returning to their own land, where most of their kindred, and all the friends of their youth, were dead? They had no politics beyond a blind adoration of all the Napoleons; and I question

whether, in 1856, they knew much more of the Russian language than they had done in 1814. That last is the case with hundreds upon hundreds of French people settled in St. Petersburg. They bring their Paris with them, as it were; set up a little Lutetia of their own on the banks of the Neva; pick up just enough colloquial Russ to direct their workpeople and scold their servants, and are content. Very few of them can write the Russian characters or read a Russian newspaper, even after many years' residence in the country. Why should they? Have they not the *Gazette de St. Petersbourg* in French?

Deeply interested as I have ever been in all things touching the Napoleonic legend, I could not help continually pestering this antique Benedick and Beatrice for anecdotes relating to the campaign of 1812; but it was only the scantiest information that I could obtain from them. It was so long ago, they pleaded, and they had forgotten so much. They had been, however, in the train of the Grande Armée. They remembered Marshal Ney as a very choleric warrior, who swore fearfully. They recollected Murat, King of Naples. Yes; he *did* wear his hair in long ringlets; and when he charged at the head of his cavalry, the Cossacks used to cheer him—"Hourra, Moura!" They knew him to be a foeman worthy of their steel. "And he never killed a man," the old lady used to say, taking an ample pinch of snuff. "He never even drew his sword in action. He only waved a light riding-switch." Had they ever seen the Emperor? Yes; the husband had—but where

was the use of telling me about him? Everybody knew all about his grey great-coat, his little cocked hat, and his white Arab charger, with the housings of crimson and gold.

Monsieur was frankly communicative as to the share which he had taken in the campaign. He was a sergeant when he crossed the frontier; won his lieutenant's epaulettes at the Moskova, and was promoted to a captaincy the day before he was taken prisoner. And Madame? She was quite as explicit, although rather mysteriously so. "I was not an officer's wife," she remarked, "but I was at the Beresina. Perhaps Monsieur thinks that I was a *cantinière*, or a regimental washerwoman. Not so, *j'étais justement caporal de hussards.*" She went on to tell me that in the great war between 1793 and 1814, the number of counterparts, in the French army, of our Phœbe Hessells and Hannah Snells had been surprisingly numerous. Sheer self-devotion impelled hundreds of girls to substitute themselves for their sweethearts who had been drawn for the conscriptions; while others voluntarily enlisted through a spirit of gay dare-devilry and love of adventure. When, as sometimes, but not very often, happened, their sex was discovered, they were invariably treated with chivalrous respect, both by officers and privates. Many of these Amazons had gained the Cross of the Legion of Honour on the field of battle; and, on retiring from active service, they usually married non-commissioned officers. By the way, the real Madame Sans-Gêne was not the washerwoman who afterwards

became the wife of Marshal Lefêvre, Duke of Dantzic. She was a farmer's daughter called Thérèse Levigueur, or some such name; and early in the Revolution enlisted, *with her uncle*, in a regiment of Dragoons. As in the time of the Fronde, it was pre-eminently an epoch for *les femmes fortes*.

But you may have been asking where and how the lots of fun which I was promised came in at the Maison Martius. I will explain. The comic element was contributed by the theatrical guests at the *table d'hôte*. These were all members of or connected with the company at the French Theatre at Petersburg. There were "leading ladies," and *ingénues; pères nobles; jeunes premières;* low comedians; *soubrettes* and singing chambermaids; young ladies whose speciality was "breeches parts," and "heavy old men." We had a leader of the orchestra, and a famous soloist on the cornet-à-piston, who had made the tour of the world, and had acquired a large fortune. We had the actresses' mothers, who were even droller than their offspring. The noise, the babble and scandal, the merry farces and *blagues*, the tittle-tattle of the *coulisses!* It was entrancing; it was matchless; and it would have been inimitable had it not been destined to be pictured long years afterwards in words, in the less offensive episodes of M. Émile Zola's splendid and abominable novel "Nana." The *comédiennes* sometimes fell out with the *comédiens*, and the old Frenchwomen frequently squabbled among themselves—usually on a question of ten kopecks—over the nocturnal bezique or

loto ; but, on the whole, we were a very harmonious gathering, and got on capitally.

After about a week or so I began to think that I had heard all the stories and exhausted most of the humours of the *table d'hôte ;* and I should have moved to some other place of residence ; but, to my great gratification, Mrs. Ward proposed that I should in future lunch and dine in her rooms. This arrangement suited me admirably. I was beginning to learn Russian, and I knew that my American friends had numerous acquaintances among the upper classes in St. Petersburg. Again, the change of venue enabled me to lead that which I have always held to be the most delightful of lives—a polyglot one. Of course, we talked English—although far from invariably ; but Mrs. Ward's only daughter was being trained in operatic singing ; and her professor in the art was an Italian named Rubini, a near relation of the famous tenor to whom I had so often listened, with rapture, in my boyhood. I was usually present at her lessons, and the conversation during at least six hours in every day was mainly in Italian. The Christian name of Mrs. Ward's daughter was Geneviève. She was very young, and beautiful ; and a few months before I had the honour to meet her, she had married, at Nice, a Russian nobleman, Count Constantine de Guerbel, a son of General Count de Guerbel, one of the aide-de-camps of the Tsar Nicolas. The life of the gifted and accomplished lady of whom I am speaking has been one long romance ; but publicity has long since been given to its

most dramatic incidents; and it is unnecessary that I should dwell upon it in detail here, save but so far as it relates to my own Life and Adventures.

Now as regards our Russian acquaintances. When Mrs. Ward and her family first arrived at St. Petersburg, they went to stay with the Hon. Mr. Seymour—usually known in the United States of America as "Governor" Seymour, from his having been governor of the State of New York—who, in 1856, was American Minister to Russia. After a while, Mrs. Ward left the handsome *habitat* of the Legation for apartments at the Maison Martius, but we very often saw his Excellency; and scarcely a day passed without our receiving a visit from Colonel Pearce (or Pierce), the Secretary of Legation. I say "we," because Mrs. Ward was so kind as to present me to the Minister; and one of the first invitations which I received during my stay in Petropolis was to a ball at the American Legation. It was a very grand affair. About half of the guests were Russian nobles of high rank and their ladies; while the others were mostly members of the *corps diplomatique*, and officers of the Imperial Guard. These warriors were all in uniform; and the diplomatists and court functionaries, although in evening dress, were profusely adorned with ribbons, collars, stars, and crosses.

A great many years had elapsed since, as a round-headed little boy at my mother's knee, I had seen anything of the patrician, or even the fashionable, world; and I confess that, in a tail-coat and continua-

tions which had evidently not been made by Poole, and without so much as a temperance medal at my button-hole, I felt somewhat nervous, not to say terrified, in the midst of all these epaulettes and aiguillettes; these stars, and ribbons, and crosses: to say nothing of the diamonds, and pearls, and rubies, and emeralds of the ladies. I have long since got over my nervousness in such matters; but the ball at Governor Seymour's was to me a new revelation. I was soon reassured, however, when I noticed the so entirely democratic costume assumed by the Minister and by Colonel Pearce—black "claw-hammer" coat, vest, and trousers to match. Of course, I did not dance. I should as soon have thought of standing on my head; and, strange to relate, although I was carefully trained in drawing-room dancing in my youth, I have never once, since adolescence, ventured on any kind of exercitation on that which is conventionally known as the "light fantastic toe"; but which, in many cases, might be much more appropriately designated the heavy realistic hoof.

The ball-room of the Legation was spacious; but it was overcrowded, and excessively hot. The friendly Colonel Pearce whispered to me that there was a smoking-room, and pointed out the way to it; and I found myself in another large apartment, even hotter than the ball-room; since it was thronged with gentlemen, nearly all officers of the Guard, who were smoking like so many Sheffield factory chimneys. Not, when the first fit of coughing was over, that I

quarrelled with the smoking; since the big cigars that were being puffed were chiefly Regalias Imperiales of the choicest Havana brands. To my mind, there are only at present three cities in Europe where you can obtain a thoroughly good Havana cigar. These cities are—London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. There is, to be sure, a depôt for real Havanas in Paris, next door to the Grand Hotel. The "weeds" are genuine enough, being directly imported by the French Government; but they are badly selected, badly kept, and are, as a rule, much too moist. In Italy, again, there is, in such great towns as Rome, Naples, Florence, Venice, Milan, and Turin a "Regia di Tabacchi," where, at a fairly moderate price, real Havana cigars are obtainable; but their quality can never be depended upon. I strongly suspect that the ill-paid employees not unfrequently palm off on inexperienced customers the products of Bremen or Hamburg, instead of that of the Vuelta de Abajo.

I used, when I was first in St. Petersburg, to buy my cigars from a tobacconist named Ten Katt, who kept an old-fashioned shop, with two bay-windows, on the Nevskoi, close to the Polizei Most, or Police Bridge. He told me that he was the lineal descendant of a Dutchman, who had been tobacconist to Peter the Great, during that monarch's stay in Holland, and that it was at the instigation of Peter Velikè himself that he had emigrated to Russia and set up in business at St. Petersburg. Naturally, the original Ten Katt only sold tobacco for pipe-smoking, and snuff. I think he

told me that cigars were not known in Russia until the end of the first decade of the present century. Still, had the gallant warriors of the Chevalier and the Preobajinski Guards been smoking the coarsest *caporal*, I would not have minded it. For the first time in my life I found myself face to face with the most interesting—sometimes repellent—compound of savagery and civilisation—the Russian "Boyard." He has lost that specific designation these many years past. At present he is a "Gospodin," a Lord, an Excellency, *un noble Russe;* but paint, and veneer, and lacquer, and scent him as you will; dress him up in a laced coat; give him a whole constellation of stars and crosses; cover him with a cocked hat, a helmet, or a gibus; let him wear patent-leather boots and white kid gloves—he is still, physically and intellectually, in his essence, of the self-same nature as one of those Boyards whom Peter forced to cut off their long beards, and replace their furred and embroidered caftans by square-skirted coats, silk stockings, buckled shoes, three-cornered hats, and flowing periwigs.

The Russian Boyard no longer hangs up his wife by the hair of her head, as seventeenth-century travellers in Muscovy tell us that he used to do; and having whipped her raw from the nape of the neck to the heels, makes her put on a chemise soaked in brandy, and then sets her on fire. Such barbarity takes far different forms in these days; but scratch the noble Russian as he is, and no inconsiderable amount of the savage, as well as the Tartar, will be found beneath his moral

epidermis. Hear what Russians themselves have to say of the vices which officers who have served in Central Asia bring back with them. I heard once of a certain English Duke, who told a relative that he knew only three things that were worth living for—eating, drinking, and money; but there is a fourth constituent in the life-course of the typical Russian noble. When he has become satiated with wine, and women, and gambling, he usually turns extremely devout, and passes most of his time on his knees, burning wax tapers before an "ikon" of the Virgin.

For the rest he has his good qualities, this Muscovite "Gospodin." He is brave, he is generous, he is often affectionate, and he loves art in every form. Many of these redeeming traits he shares with his former villein, the shock-headed, tawny-bearded *moujik*, Ivan Ivanovich. I remember an English diplomatist telling me once that when he was appointed Ambassador to the court of Russia, he paid a visit, while passing through Berlin, on his way to St. Petersburg, to Prince Bismarck, who at one period had been Prussian Minister there, and asked him for his candid opinion of the Russian character. The then Chancellor mused for a few moments, and then made this oracular deliverance: "The Russian, your Excellency, is a very good fellow, *till he tucks his shirt in.*" None but those who have been again and again in Russia, and have carefully studied the manners of all classes there, can fully appreciate the pregnant sagacity of the Bismarckian appreciation.

Ivan Ivanovich, the *moujik*, wears his red cotton shirt above, instead of under, his baggy galligaskins. He is, in many respects, a capital fellow. He is courageous, cheerful, industrious, and faithful; and his shortcomings do not go much beyond a normal tendency to get tipsy whenever he can procure sufficient *vodka* for the purpose, and an occasional tendency to thrash his wife black and blue. But when Ivan's big beard is shaved off and his shock-head is trimmed and oiled and perfumed; when he drinks Veuve Clicquot instead of corn-brandy, and eats stuffed turkey and *pâté de foie gras* instead of rye-bread and salted gherkins; *when he tucks his shirt in* and wears a showy uniform or faultless evening dress, then in most cases his moral character sadly deteriorates, and his varnish of refinement is only a thin covering to mendacity, and profligacy, and cruelty.

That ball at the American Legation was the precursor of many entertainments as amusing and interesting; and, besides, Mrs. Ward used to receive a constant flow of Russian ladies and gentlemen. Among the latter I remember cadets of the École des Pages, or Imperial Pages; and in particular, among the officers of the Guard I recall a tall young gentleman who bore the remarkable name of Ginghis Khan, and who was a lineal descendant of that conqueror. He was a captain in the Circassian Regiment of the Guards; and I saw him once at a review arrayed in full Circassian panoply—a silver-adorned casque, high boots, white kid gloves, *and a coat of mail.*

Another frequent visitor at Mrs. Ward's was a distinguished professor of the University of St. Petersburg. What his name was does not signify, but I am tolerably sure that it ended in "off." Natural history was his forte. He drew with singular elegance and accuracy, and contributed to Madame de Guerbel's album quite a museum of counterfeit presentments of wild animals, fishes, and reptiles. Mrs. Ward was herself an admirable copyist in oil of the Old Masters; and when her daughter had any leisure from her singing lessons, she also drew and painted; while I took up my pencil once more and executed numerous water-colour drawings—extremely vile, I dare say they were—recalling operatic and dramatic *souvenirs* of the past. As for the distinguished Professor, I heard of him only once after I left Russia. He was attached in a scientific capacity to some military expedition in Russian-Asia; and had a rather unpleasantly lively time among hostile hill tribes; at least so one was justified in inferring from a passage in the report which he transmitted to the Government at St. Petersburg. "Being attached by the right wrist to the saddle-bow of a native chief mounted on a native pony, rapidly galloping over rocky ground; with my left ankle sprained, a large flap of skin detached from my forehead, by a blow from a *handjar*, hanging over one eye; my spectacles smashed, and my note-books lost, I was temporarily unable to make those minute observations of the *fauna* and *flora* of the region which I had been instructed to furnish."

So with music, painting, and drawing, and the

brightest of converse in French and Italian, that which to me was a halcyon summer ran its golden course. The weather was tropically hot, and one had to keep indoors nearly all day; but the nights—they did not become quite dark until nearly midnight, and then the sun seemed to "dip" rather than set—were deliciously cool and refreshing. It was a joy to be rowed in a gaily canopied barque, something of the form of a Venetian gondola, on the broad blue bosom of the Neva; and a score of years afterwards, when I saw Luke Fildes's noble picture of "Fair Quiet and Sweet Rest," the nocturnal water-parties on the Neva came back to me: mellowed, indeed, by the sober touch of time, but without one trace of sadness.

I did not go to the coronation of the Tsar Alexander II. Had I done so I should have met my friend and colleague Sutherland Edwards, who had been despatched to Russia by Vizetelly as special correspondent of the *Illustrated Times;* but I had not the means of "doing" the great pageant myself. The cost of living at Moscow during the festivities was enormous. I had no status as a member of the Press. Honestly speaking, I scarcely considered myself to be a journalist at all; and I should not have been able to attain admission to the Kremlin on the momentous day. By this time I had drawn my last instalment of credit from the house of Stieglitz; and I had just enough money to bring me home, or rather, within a certain distance from home, comfortably. I little thought, nevertheless, when I turned my back on

Petropolis, not a little disappointed that I could not afford the journey to Moscow, that two-and-twenty years afterwards I should traverse European Russia from the Baltic to the shores of the Black Sea; that I was afterwards to see the murdered Tsar Alexander II. lying dead in his coffin, and subsequently witness the coronation of his son Alexander III.

I bade a cheery farewell to my friends the Wards—they had not, by the way, the remotest idea as to my profession, if profession it could be called, or of the errand which had brought me to Russia — and took steamer at Cronstadt for Flensburg in Schleswig-Holstein. It was gloomy autumn weather. In due time I reached Hamburg; and so pushed on to Brussels, where I had resolved to remain for several weeks pouring out for *Household Words* the somewhat copious store of information which, since April, I had gathered about Russia and the Russians.

As it chanced, at Brussels I met Robert Brough, who, with his wife and his little daughter Fanny—now an excellent and deservedly popular actress—was temporarily domiciled in the pleasant suburb of St. Josse-ten-Noode, where he was writing farces, and contributing a weekly column of gossip about things in general to the London *Sunday Times*. I worked very hard—I should say for full seven weeks—at my Russian experiences, which Dickens elected to call "A Journey Due North;" although everybody knows that St. Petersburg is not by any means due north of London Bridge Terminus. But

the title was catching, and the opening chapters were liked by the Conductor of *Household Words* and by the public. Robert Brough used to read them in the evening to his wife, as they appeared week after week; and my brother Charles wrote me from Brighton that my mother—who, although only sixty-five, was growing painfully feeble—highly approved of them. So we were all very happy, and I, perhaps, the happiest; notwithstanding what the Italians humorously call *una mancanza assoluta di quattrini*. My money was almost entirely exhausted; and I was grimly resolved not to write to Dickens for another penny until I had accomplished a certain amount of labour.

I was so comically short of cash that at the beginning of each week I used to lay in a stock of bread, sufficient to last one for four days—it grew too stale to be eatable on the fifth—and this, with a slice of Dutch cheese, a few sausages, with a cold hard-boiled egg every morning, completed my commissariat. I could get cigars at a halfpenny apiece; and besides, in those days, pipe-tobacco in Belgium was ridiculously cheap. That is still the case, I believe. I was never much of a smuggler. You cannot smuggle anything without feeling a good deal of anxiety, and anxiety is precisely the thing which people with a nervous temperament should strive their utmost to avoid; still, I never come nowadays without a box of right Cabañas. Hitherto I have got my "weeds" safely through the Belgium Custom House. But to return to the question of the "provand." The Belgian beer, known

as *faro*, looked bright enough; but I found it so hideously sour that I could not drink it. Wine was altogether beyond my means; but milk was cheap and good, and I was always safe, at Brough's, for tea or coffee in the evening, and for a glass of something stronger later on.

My own domicile was a little bit of a bedroom, four storeys high, in a narrow street behind the Town Hall. My landlady was the worthiest of Belgian *blanchisseuses de fin*, who spoke much more Flemish than she did French, and to whom I covenanted, on my first coming, to pay a month's rent in advance. That preliminary disbursement—the rent was only five francs a week—gave me infinite serenity of mind. No man whose pursuits are intellectual or artistic can be happy if he be in arrear with his rent.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH DICKENS.

Home Again—In Search of a Publisher—A Rupture with Mr. Wills and with Dickens—Consulting Mr. Henry James—Results of the Russian Trip—"The Baddington Peerage": the Worst Novel ever Perpetrated—I am Characterised by Mrs. Carlyle—The *Welcome Guest*.

In the middle of November I returned to London. I had produced a good deal more manuscript than I thought would flow from my pen during a given period; and I thus felt justified in writing to Mr. Wills for a ten-pound note to pay my expenses home; and this enabled me to pay my fare by Lille and Calais to London, to buy a few books and prints in Brussels, and to arrive at London Bridge with a couple of sovereigns in my pocket. On the evening of my arrival I went, first of all, to see Edmund Yates and his charming wife, in Doughty Street; and the next morning I went down to Brighton to my mother and my brother Charles. Returning to town in a day or two, I went to *Household Words* office, to see Mr. Wills, who, to my great joy, told me that the "Journey Due North" was a distinct success, and a day or two afterwards Dickens asked me to dinner at Tavistock House. I also dined with Thackeray, in Onslow Square. Both these great writers urged me to lose no time in negotiating for the republication of the "Journey" in book-form. Now, although there are

not many things of which I am afraid, and I have confronted danger in a hundred forms all over the world during the last forty years, I have always been the timidest and most irresolute of mankind in my transactions with publishers. I keep my books accurately; I pay my way; but I have scarcely ever been successful in my dealings with the commercial descendants of Bernard Lintot and Jacob Tonson. I have written some two-score books; and had I been gifted with an ordinary business faculty of this kind I should be by this time a wealthy man; since only a part of my life has been devoted to literature; and for the last thirty years, by dint of unremitting industry, I have derived an ample income from daily journalism—an income which has never been reckoned in less than four figures. It is only since the beginning of this year (1894) that I have had the advantage of the assistance of a thoroughly intelligent and trustworthy agent, Mr. A. P. Watt, of Norfolk Street, who has successfully carried out on my behalf financial arrangements with publishers over which I should myself have hopelessly broken down.

I had just common sense enough, in 1856, to be aware that if I personally tried to sell the copyright of the "Journey Due North" I should make a lamentable mess of the entire affair. So I wrote to my brother Charles to come up to town to pull through the business, if he could. It happened that when he was a clerk in the Tithes Commissioners office at Somerset House he had had for a fellow-employee a certain Mr.

George Routledge, who afterwards went into business in Soho Square as a seller of cheap books. In fact, the late Mr. Routledge, whose intelligence, shrewdness, and probity placed him on a par with the late Mr. W. H. Smith, was practically the inventor of the shilling book, of which so many millions have been sold during the last three decades. In 1856 the firm had become Warne and Routledge, and had its offices in Farringdon Street, E.C., close to, if not actually on part of, the site of the old Fleet Prison. Charles called on Mr. George Routledge, and renewed his acquaintance with his quondam fellow-clerk; and the very next day he told me that the firm had agreed to purchase the "Journey Due North" for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds.

Two hundred and fifty pounds! It was a fortune; it was a Pactolus suddenly promising to roll through the normally unsavoury channel of the Fleet Ditch. Two hundred and fifty pounds! I had never set hands on such a lump sum since the days of my all-too-brief grandeur and decadence in 1850. But now I thought I must be prudent, even to wariness. No more bandana pocket-handkerchiefs. No more starting of magazines, Conservative, Liberal, or Radical. No more expeditions to the Continent, to break the bank at Aix-la-Chapelle. Alnaschar! Alnaschar! What had I in my basket? I quarrelled with Dickens. When, fourteen years afterwards, he died, I wrote a notice of him in the *Daily Telegraph;* and shortly afterwards this notice, considerably expanded, was re-published by Messrs. George

Routledge and Sons, of the Broadway, Ludgate Hill. It was a shilling booklet, which had an immense sale, and it is now—so the booksellers' catalogues tell me—scarce, and somewhat costly. Now in this trifle I made a passing allusion to my misunderstanding with Dickens early in 1857; and, moved by I hope not ungenerous impulse, I added that in this feud I had been in the wrong.

I revered the writer and I loved the man. But at a time when the grave had scarcely closed over him I disdained to say that he had been as much in the wrong as I. A spiteful (and, of course, anonymous) critic in an evening paper, for which I have too much contempt to name it, went out of his way, while professing to review a work of mine entitled "Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known," to say that Dickens was very kind to me, and that it was at his expense that I went to Russia. Charles Dickens was kind to many more youthful authors besides myself; and he was for five years exceptionally kind to me, for the reason that he had known me in my early youth. But, confound it! I gave him malt for his meal. In the course of those five years I wrote nearly three hundred articles for *Household Words;* and I was such a dullard, so maladroit, so blind to my own interest, that between 1851 and my return from St. Petersburg, I never sought his permission to re-publish one of those papers. As to the statement of the spiteful critic, that I went to Russia at Dickens's expense, there is in it a suppression of truth which is more

than a suggestion of falsehood. In the last letter which he wrote me before he went away, he said, "You shall have the means of travelling in comfort and respectability." I drew a certain sum to defray my expenses to St. Petersburg; and there I found, at Messrs. Stieglitz', a monthly credit of forty pounds. In all, between April and November, I received the sum of two hundred and forty pounds, eight-tenths of which I spent in subsistence and travelling outlay; and I landed in England, as I have said, with two pounds in my pocket. It logically follows that if I went to Russia at Dickens's expense I wrote the "Journey Due North" entirely at my own.

Where I was to blame in the matter was as follows. About half-a-dozen papers remained to be written to complete the plan of my "Journey." I was dissatisfied with what I considered to be the ungenerous treatment which I had received. I found that I could earn at least ten pounds a week by working for Henry Vizetelly, and the delivery of the last half-dozen chapters of the "Journey" hung fire. Then came a coolness between myself and Mr. Wills, and then an open rupture. I demanded payment for my travelling expenses; and I was referred to one Mr. Smith, a solicitor, in Golden Square, who informed me that I had received the sum of two hundred and forty pounds, as aforesaid, as full remuneration for my services; that I owed the proprietors of *Household Words* nothing, and that they owed me nothing. But now I come to the cruellest part of the business. I asked Dickens's permission to

re-publish the "Journey Due North" and the other essays which I had contributed to *Household Words*. That permission—although he had already advised me to haste and republish—he positively refused to grant So away into the darkest of nonentities went the two hundred and fifty pounds which Messrs. Routledge, Warne and Routledge were to pay me.

It appeared that, as the law of copyright then stood, I had absolutely no remedy. I was too poor to pay for counsel's opinion; but my friend "Billy" Hale, the son of Archdeacon Hale, sometime Master of the Chapter House, put my miserable little case before Mr. Henry (now Sir Henry) James, then a young, but rising barrister, who kindly sent me word that the proprietor of a periodical had the power of putting an embargo on the republication of contributions, unless a special agreement to the contrary had been made. I might, perhaps, have fought the matter, since Dickens knew perfectly well that I was in treaty with Routledge, Warne and Routledge. But I was indignant and mortified to the stage of disgust; and so gave the whole thing up.

The worst of it was that I was regarded by my fellow-members at the Savage Club as an unmitigated young bore. I was too full of Russia. They did not want to hear, morning, noon, and night, about the Nevskoi Perspekt and the Bolschoi Morskaia. They were not interested in the Gostinnoi Dvor, and did not care twopence about Captain Ginghis Khan, of the Circassians of the Guard, or Ivan Ivanovich the *moujik*. My Russian trip did, indeed,

bring me one rather bright promise of patronage. Mr. Cheyne Brady, son of the then Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*, wrote to ask if I would write for that periodical a series of papers, to be called "The Streets of the World"; and I foolishly promised to do so; but ere long I discovered that I was wholly incompetent to perform the task, and so gave it up. What did I know of the streets of the world in 1857? I had just wandered about London, and Paris, and Brighton. I had had a glimpse of Berlin, and a peep at Copenhagen, but the remainder of the thoroughfares of the world's cities were most unknown to me. Time hath its revenges, and mine came, in the matter of the "Journey Due North," and my other embargoed articles in *Household Words*, swiftly and comically enough. Perhaps I err in calling it a revenge at all; for I never was vindictive; I loved and admired Dickens with all my heart; and at this distance of time I feel convinced that having had no experience of the Special Correspondent, who in 1857 was almost a novel personage, he failed to see that I had any claim to travelling expenses. I had charged him none when I repeatedly sent him articles from Paris, from the North of England, and from Ireland. Why should I be paid, so he may have reasoned, for travelling a couple of thousand miles? But I must not anticipate things.

Little by little I found out that my Russian trip, although it had been financially disastrous to me, had in other respects done me an appreciable amount of

good. Publishers and editors began to know who I was and what I could do. Dr. Macaulay, whom I still rejoice to number among my oldest and most valued friends, suggested that I should write for the *Leisure Hour*, of which he was the editor, a series of articles on social life in London, to be illustrated by a young and clever draughtsman on wood, William McConnell. Finally, Henry Vizetelly told me that he would give me as much work as ever I could undertake on the *Illustrated Times;* and encouraged me to write in that paper a novel called "The Baddington Peerage." Of course, James Hannay at once dubbed it "The Paddington Beerage." It was subsequently published in three-volume form; and I candidly confessed in the preface that it was about the worst novel ever perpetrated; and re-reading it, at Brighton, more than thirty years afterwards, I saw no reason to alter my original opinion.

There was no plot to speak of in "The Baddington Peerage"; although the incidents comprised at least one murder, a duel *à mort*, an incendiary fire, and a suicide. There was no character worth mentioning, beyond a felonious medical student and a wicked duchess. This lamentable romance nevertheless obtained one distinctly favourable review in the *Athenæum;* and I subsequently learned that the reviewer was Miss Geraldine Jewsbury, the intimate friend of Mrs. Carlyle. The last-named lady I never saw; yet sometimes, with the fatuity of an old man, I choose to please myself by fancying that she had read my early works, and that their perusal had

led her to form an estimate of my capacity, communicated to me by the late James Lowe, editor of the *Critic*, who had heard it from her own lips:—"Butcher's boy. Cart. Pony. Goes on whistling. Plenty of meat." I have listened to some flowery things about myself in my time; but I aver that I never derived such gratification from an eulogium as I did from Mrs. Carlyle's simile of the butcher's boy who had plenty of meat in his cart, and was always whistling.

Vizetelly sold the *Illustrated Times* to Mr. Herbert Ingram, M.P. for Boston, and proprietor of the *Illustrated London News;* and immediately afterwards started a weekly illustrated periodical, called *The Welcome Guest.* It was at the outset a most brilliant success. The *pièce de résistance* was a novel called "Debit and Credit," a translation from the German of Gustav Freytag's "Soll und Haben." Then Frederick and James Greenwood wrote in collaboration a powerful work of fiction, entitled "Under a Cloud," which was illustrated by Hablot K. Browne, the facile and humorous artist who also illustrated my "Baddington Peerage" in the *Illustrated Times*, and a little book I once wrote, called "How I Tamed Mrs. Cruiser." Cruiser was the ostensibly incorrigible "buckjumper," which was ultimately subjugated by the famous American horse-tamer, Rarey; and my "Mrs. Cruiser" was a lady of high spirits and maddening perversity, who was at length made quite meek and mild by skilfully judicious treatment on the part of her husband.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE STAFF OF THE *DAILY TELEGRAPH.*

My First Visit to the Offices of the *Daily Telegraph* in an Embroidered Camlet Vest—Getting Rigged Out at a "Reach-me-down" Shop—Early Leading Articles—Dickens's Quarrel with Bradbury and Evans—*All the Year Round* and *Once a Week*—A Deputation on the Paper Duty—The Great Lord Derby—The Cheap Press Forty Years Ago—"Flying Stationers"—Reconciliation with Dickens—Another Attempt to Break the Bank—A *Times* Review and its Consequences—"Make Your Game"—"Twice Round the Clock"—Edmund Yates on His Early Indiscretions—A Hard Day's Work—My Radicalism Leavened with Conservatism—The St. Johns—Different Methods of the *D.T.* Staff—Penny Papers Held in Contempt—George Hodder—Smoking at Public Dinners.

It was in 1857, but I cannot remember in what month, that I first began to write for the *Daily Telegraph.* I have every reason to believe that it was Edmund Yates who was instrumental in making me known to Mr. J. M. Levy, one of the proprietors of the then young and struggling journal; or to his eldest son, now Sir Edward Lawson, Bart.; at all events, either one or the other happened to be struck by an anonymous leader of mine in the *Illustrated Times,* and asked Edmund, as being connected with the paper, if he knew the name of the writer. He named me. He did not know where I lived—I had a chronic dislike to let anybody know where I lived—but mentioned my ordinary "house of call," which was then a tavern in Catherine Street, Strand.

Sir Edward Lawson, coming to me the other day at

Brighton, gave me in the course of conversation a most humorous description of my personal appearance on the occasion of my first visit to the offices of the *Daily Telegraph*. He said that I had got myself up for the interview; and that I was attired in a chocolate-coloured frock-coat, a double-breasted plaid velvet waistcoat, trousers of uncertain hue and much too short for me, and blucher boots. I plead guilty to the chocolate frock-coat and the too brief pantaloons; I acknowledge the blucher boots; but I join issue with my old friend on the subject of the waistcoat. It was not of plaid or of velvet; nor was it double-breasted. It was a black camlet vest, profusely embroidered with beads and bugles of jet. Now, how on earth did I come to wear in the daytime such an extraordinary article of attire? I will tell you very briefly.

I had two allies, brothers, of the Hebrew persuasion, who were in the "reach-me-down" or second-hand clothes line of business, and whose shop was in the Strand, nearly opposite Somerset House. They were very worthy, obliging, warm-hearted people, and over and over again had they "rigged me out" when I wanted to go to the opera or to a masquerade, or when I was asked out to dinner in polite society in London or at Brighton. When I called at the *Daily Telegraph* office I was badly off for waistcoats. I wanted an exceptionally smart one; and my Semitic allies in the Strand lent me this particular garment with *passementerie* of jet. As a matter of fact,

however, young Mr. Edward Levy and his uncle, Mr. Lionel Lawson, had previously called on me at the hostelry in Catherine Street, then the rendezvous of the Savage Club, and arranged the day and hour for an interview with Mr. J. M. Levy, who edited the *Daily Telegraph*.

At first it was only occasionally that I wrote for this great newspaper. One of my first leading articles was on the going to sea, as a midshipman, of Prince Alfred, afterwards Duke of Edinburgh, and now Duke of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. In those early days, too, I remember writing a descriptive article on the funeral of Douglas Jerrold, and an obituary notice on Eugène Sue, the author of the "Mysteries of Paris" and the "Wandering Jew."

I think that about this time I was fain to relinquish the practice of wearing "reach-me-downs"; for Mrs. Ward and her daughter and son had come to London; and I had to see them every day; and frequently to accompany them to the opera or the play. The very day of her arrival Miss Geneviève Ward called on Mr., afterwards Sir, Julius Benedict, to whom she had a letter of introduction. Fortunately for the youthful *cantatrice*, there was to be a grand concert that evening at Northumberland House, in the Strand; and the *maestro*—Sir Julius was one of the kindest of souls—at once engaged her to sing at the duchess's concert, and for a handsome honorarium.

At another concert, too, that season did Miss Geneviève Ward sing. It was that of my mother, who

for years past had come up from Brighton to give a concert either at Willis's or at the Hanover Square Rooms. Mr. Sims Reeves sang for her gratuitously; Benedict conducted, likewise without fee or reward; and Geneviève Ward sang the Yemstchick song, "*Vot na pouti celo bolschoia*," the words of which I had translated from the Russ. The song, the melody of which is as tuneful as that of "Wapping Old Stairs," was afterwards published by Cramer, Addison and Beale; but the literary adviser of the firm did not think my words were poetical enough; so they were re-cast by clever John Oxenford, the dramatic critic of the *Times*. In the autumn the Wards went to Paris; and in the winter I joined them there, writing plenty of "copy" for the *Welcome Guest*, and sending occasional leaders to the *Daily Telegraph*: my paymaster being Mr. Lionel Lawson, who had some kind of business relations in Paris, and occupied pleasant bachelor's quarters close to the Boulevard des Italiens.

It was in 1858 that Charles Dickens had some matrimonial troubles; and out of these troubles arose his quarrel with Bradbury and Evans, his publishers. I did not know at the time anything of the rights and wrongs of the matter. I was told all about it not long afterwards; and I say now, as I said after Dickens's death, the secret was no affair of mine, and that so long as I lived it would never be revealed by me. I should say that, beyond the members of Dickens's own family, there are, now that Wilkie Collins and Edmund Yates are gone, scarcely any custodians of this secret

besides myself. One of the disagreeable circumstances, springing from an altogether melancholy business, was the sale by auction of the copyright of *Household Words*, in which Bradbury and Evans held some share. I was present at the sale; and the property put up comprised not only *Household Words*, but also the *Household Budget*, a monthly compendium of news, edited by Mr. George Hogarth, Dickens's father-in-law. The first bid was made by Mr. John Maxwell, an energetic advertising agent, who characteristically observed that he "would give five hundred pounds for the lot." Who the other bidders were I forget; but the "lot" was eventually knocked down for something like two thousand pounds to Arthur Smith (brother of Albert), acting on Dickens's behalf.

Shortly afterwards the great writer began the conduct of a new weekly periodical on the old familiar lines, under the title *All the Year Round*, with which was incorporated *Household Words*. Bradbury and Evans were not to be baffled. They determined to bring out in direct rivalry to *All the Year Round* a new weekly journal of their own, to be called *Once a Week;* and this venture they resolved should be illustrated by the very best artists of the day. I had some slight acquaintance with Mr. Henry Bradbury, the son of the senior partner in the great publishing firm in Whitefriars; and he wrote to ask me if I would like to join the staff of the new journal. I replied that I should very much like to do so; only that it would be as well to know on what principles the magazine

was to be conducted. Henry Bradbury thereupon sent me a letter to Mr. Samuel Lucas, a conspicuous member of the *Times* staff, who had been appointed editor of *Once a Week*. He received me cordially at his rooms in Savile Row. We talked for a long time on the prospects of *Once a Week;* and on shaking hands at parting he observed: "We shall be very strong in science." I do not know how it was; but before I got into Burlington Gardens the words which I have quoted began to grate on my ears. Most assuredly, I was never strong on science. In nearly all the "ologies" I am a profound ignoramus; and the only "onomy" that I know anything about is gastronomy. It is true that now and again we used to have a scientific article in *Household Words*. One in particular in 1851. It was a terribly powerful description of a serious operation at St. George's Hospital, in which the operating surgeon was spoken of as "Breaking into the Bloody House of Life"—a magnificent paraphrase of Shakespeare's immortal metaphor. I thought about *Once a Week* a good many times that day; and in the end I elected to let my potential editor and his science alone. Meanwhile, I was working very hard and earning a good deal of money on the *Daily Telegraph*. The enterprising proprietors were doing all they possibly could to make the paper both a literary and a commercial success; but to accomplish the latter was terribly uphill work. The paper duty weighed heavily on journalism. I had begun by this time to speak a little in public, and I had the courage to

address one evening a large public meeting convened to protest against the taxes on knowledge.

Charles Knight, publisher and editor of the *Penny Magazine* and *Penny Cyclopædia*, Robert Chambers, and Edward Levy were among the speakers; and as regards my own humble attempt at oratory, I pointed out that the only notice that the State had ever taken of Charles Dickens was to sanction the prosecution of the proprietors of the *Household Budget* by the Inland Revenue authorities for an alleged violation of the Stamp Act. I think that the prosecution broke down. I was a member likewise of a deputation which went up to Downing Street—a Conservative Government being in power—to interview the Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, on the subject of these same paper duties.

This was not the late Earl, who gave James Hannay his consulate, and whom I had the honour to know very well—perhaps he would have put *me* down for a vice-consulate, somewhere, say, at the Cruel Islands, had I been ambitious of such a genteel banishment—but the Earl who, as Lord Stanley, was known as the "Rupert of Debate," who translated the "Iliad," and who, in conjunction with Mr. Lear, the painter, was responsible for about the drollest opuscule ever put forth—the "Book of Nonsense." This brilliantly-talented nobleman was the son of the zoological Earl who had quite a menagerie in his park at Knowsley, and who, when he was "sair owerhanded" by the gout, used to solace himself with a quiet little cock-fight in his drawing-room; and he, again, was the son of the "short

Zacchæus" of the peerage: the "stumpy Lord," who married tall and slim and clever Miss Farren, the actress. A wonderful race—the Stanleys of Lancashire. The Prime Minister did not precisely turn us out of the room, or bid the messenger accelerate our departure by "quoiting us downstairs like an Edward shovel-board"; but, to employ the well-known forensic simile, he looked at us just as Jupiter Hostis might be expected to look on an assembly of black-beetles; and when our talk was at an end, told us in a few scornful sentences that so long as he and his colleagues remained in office, there was not the remotest chance of the duty being abolished. As all men know, it was abolished very soon afterwards. His Lordship had only made a slight mistake. Who does not make mistakes—not always slight ones? The great Duke of Wellington strenuously opposed penny postage. Lord Palmerston as hotly opposed the Suez Canal. Sydney Smith denounced the ballot; and Lord Brougham gravely doubted the expediency of appointing a Public Prosecutor.

As for the cheap press, what would the "Rupert of Debate" think could he revisit now the glimpses of the moon and behold the aristocratic *Morning Post* and the grave and reverend *Standard* transformed into penny papers? At the same time, the horror and alarm confessedly felt by the ablest Conservative statesmen of the last generation at the prospect of a cheap press are quite susceptible of explanation. When I was a boy, the metropolis was periodically

flooded by unstamped newspapers; and these were in character almost invariably either violently Radical or openly seditious. Some, like the publications of the notorious Richard Carlile, were atheistical. These papers —obviously impudent violations of the law—were furtively distributed or were sold in the street by hawkers, lineal descendants of the old "flying stationers," who were continually being pounced upon and haled up at the police-courts by the officers employed by the Inland Revenue Department. I just remember one of these "flying stationers." His name was Paddy Something; and when he was not hawking unstamped newspapers, he occupied himself with the almost as perilous craft of billsticking; for in the days before Willing and Partington and Hill, scant favour was shown to the industrials of the paste-pot and the double-crown poster; and the hoardings before buildings in course of construction usually bore the inscription "Bill-stickers Beware." Repeated fines and terms of imprisonment had not damped the ardour of Paddy Something. He was arraigned at Westminster Police Court once for the offence of pasting a huge trade-union "Bread or Blood" placard on the entrance gate of Apsley House; and on being asked what he had to say for himself, made this bold reply: "Shure I stuck it there; and for sixpence I'd stick one on the Juke's back."

My reconciliation with Dickens was due neither to the interposition of "mutual friends" nor to the interchange of explanatory correspondence. It was mainly

due, I should say, to a certain leading article written by me in the *Daily Telegraph;* but what that leader was about is, at this time of day, absolutely of no importance. *La vie,* writes Honoré de Balzac, *est impossible sans de grands oublis.* At all events, Dickens took the embargo off the "Journey Due North" and my remaining papers in *Household Words;* and the deadlock was at an end. This was in the summer of 1858; and I enjoyed the renewed friendship of Dickens and worked for him in the columns of *All the Year Round* until his death in 1870. But it was all very well to find myself the possessor of the copyright of the "Journey Due North." It was quite another matter to find a publisher. The firm of Routledge did not see their way to renewing their fascinating offer of the preceding year. Besides, they were publishing William Howard Russell's "Diary in the Crimea," which was selling by thousands. After much casting about, I succeeded in selling the "Journey Due North" to Mr. Richard Bentley, the father of the present Mr. George Bentley, of New Burlington Street.

It was but a very small sum that I obtained—something under a hundred pounds — but it was agreed that I should receive a further sum of seventy pounds in the event of the work going into a second edition. So, having corrected the proofs and arranged with Mr. Julian Portch—a clever young artist who, as correspondent of the *Illustrated Times,* had passed through the Crimean campaign — to make a drawing of the Nevskoi to serve as a frontispiece for

my "Journey," I thought that it might be permissible to enjoy a brief autumnal holiday trip; and that trip I elected to make in the company of my friends Henry Vizetelly and Augustus Mayhew. Our bourne was Homburg, then the Monte Carlo of Germany, and our purpose was obviously to break the bank; and to carry out that ambitious scheme we each, in American parlance, "planked down" the sum of fifty pounds. Vizetelly had an "infallible system"—the most infallible system that ever was known for winning at *roulette*—and we bound ourselves by a solemn league and covenant not to play any but this same infallible system; which at this present writing I look upon as perhaps the most idiotic of the innumerable and imbecile systems evolved from the distempered brains of gamblers.

Our system had nothing to do with the numbers on the *roulette* table; we were to break the bank by the following delightfully simple means. If a colour, or odd or even, or over or under eighteen gained twice, we were to bet against it; doubling our stakes if we lost, and continuing to double the stakes till we won. We travelled to Homburg-von-der Hohe *viâ* Rotterdam, Cologne, the Rhine, and Frankfort, and enjoyed ourselves hugely. Vizetelly had no gift of tongues at all beyond his own. Augustus Mayhew was colloquially fluent in French; but he declined to concern himself with the Teutonic language, which he defined as "Welsh with an occasional sneeze," and my own German was, as it has ever since been, very bad; but we managed to get on very well in our

progress through the Fatherland. Vizetelly indeed averred that it was quite possible to travel and procure all that one wanted by the use only of two words: "*Kann Mann?*" Thus: Can man; wine; water; tea; museum; theatre; church; bed; and the rest.

It need scarcely be said that our expedition, in a financial sense, was a deplorable failure. We did not break the bank at Homburg; but the bank broke us, not swiftly, but with playful procrastination, such as is used by the cat when she sports with the mouse before devouring it. For about a week we adhered inflexibly to our infallible system, and won about seven hundred pounds; then luck turned against us; we were unable to continue the reduplication of our stakes, and in the course of one happy evening we lost five hundred pounds. Then, by mutual consent, we let the infallible system go hang; and each of us played according to his own fancy. Gus Mayhew devoted himself to the cultivation of black and the *douzes derniers;* Vizetelly, with a cautious head, worked — yes, literally worked—from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day at the *trente et quarante* table; and I adhered to *roulette*, backing the numbers thirty-five and thirty-six and zero. We had varied fortunes; on some nights we dreamt of thousands of pounds piled up in silken bags; of diamond bracelets, horses, dogs, and grounds, and alternate shower-baths of Heidsieck's Dry Monopole and Jean Marie Farina's Eau de Cologne. On other days we borrowed gold Friedrichs from one another, and ultimately thalers. In eleven days we were all "stony broke."

From our first arrival we had adopted the same system of paying our hotel bill every morning; so that all we had to do when our insolvency became complete and hopeless was for Vizetelly to get a cheque for five-and-twenty pounds cashed to pay our travelling expenses home. In due time we landed at Dover; and the passage from Calais having been rather a rough one, we thought we might as well pass the day at the venerable Kentish watering-place; and so had our luggage transferred to the Lord Warden Hotel, where we ordered breakfast. There was a copy of the *Times* on the table; and the first thing which struck me on opening that influential journal, was a review, a column and a half in length, of my "Journey Due North." I had read somewhere of a Greek brigand who, when he captured travellers, made it his merry practice to cause them, irrespective of sex, to divest themselves of their garments, and to don very voluminous Turkish trousers, fastened at the ankles, and made of leather. Before these baggy vestments were fastened round the waists of the victims the facetious Klepht used to introduce into the garments three or four lively young tom-cats which had been kept without nourishment for four-and-twenty hours. The physical sensation of the ladies and gentlemen subjected by the descendant of Cacus to this practical joke may be more easily imagined than described; but I can imagine that they somewhat resembled the agony which I endured when I read that review in the *Times* of my first book.

I read and re-read it, quite forgetting my break-

fast. The reviewer began by calling my poor little production "a bundle of impertinences"; and although he did not follow the American principle of accusing me of having murdered my grandmother, and stolen clocks, he went on to insinuate that I was an idiot, a libeller, and a snob. I had reason to know afterwards that this uncomplimentary criticism emanated from the pen of a gentleman with whom I was subsequently on terms of intimate friendship—I mean the late John Oxenford. I came up to town in the dismallest of dumps; and a few days afterwards I received a letter from Mr. Richard Bentley, asking me to call at New Burlington Street at my earliest convenience. "That notice in the *Times*," said the worthy bibliopole when I met him, "has done us a world of good. The 'Journey Due North' has gone into a second edition, and I have the greatest pleasure in handing you a cheque for seventy pounds." Thus something was saved out of the wreck of my fortunes at Homburg, and besides, I forthwith began, in the *Welcome Guest*, a humorous narrative of our trip and its results, under the title of "Make Your Game; or, The Adventures of the Stout Gentleman, the Thin Gentleman, and the Man with the Iron Chest." Augustus Mayhew was the stout gentleman, Vizetelly was the thin gentleman, and I dubbed myself the man with the iron chest, because I had bought, at a rag-shop in the Judengasse, Frankfort, an old iron casket, curiously embossed with diamond-headed nails. That casket I thought would be just large enough to hold my winnings in golden Friederichs. As a matter of

fact, those winnings—to use Mr. Bob Sawyer's well-known figure of speech—might have been put into a wineglass, and covered over with a gooseberry leaf.

"Make Your Game" first appeared in serial form in the *Welcome Guest*, and was illustrated by the pencils of McConnell and myself; it was subsequently issued in book form. Again, in this same *Welcome Guest*, I wrote a series of papers extending over about six months, called "Twice Round the Clock; or, The Hours of the Day and Night in London." It is almost needless to say that the idea of thus chronicling, hour by hour, the shifting panorama of London life was not original. I never originated anything in my life, being totally destitute of the faculty of imagination. The scheme of "Twice Round the Clock" was suggested by a little eighteenth century book, by an anonymous writer, called "One Half the World Knows Not How the Other Half Lives," which gave a minute account of the humours and sorrows of Metropolitan existence from midnight on Saturday until midnight on Sunday early in the reign of George III.

This book was lent to me by Dickens, to whom it had been lent by Thackeray; and I surmise that the former was inclined to ask me to write a series of similar papers, to be published in *Household Words*. The project, however, of the "Journey Due North" put the notion of writing "Twice Round the Clock" aside; and I thought so little about it that I asked William Brough to have a chop with me at the old

Rainbow Tavern in Fleet Street; and after dinner, over a bottle of that very old port for which the Rainbow was then so justly celebrated, I unfolded my scheme to him; told him that I had abandoned it in view of my impending departure for Russia, and presented him in frankalmoign with the goodwill of the project. But William Brough was more of a dramatist than a descriptive essay writer. Whether he began a book on the lines which I had laid down for him I do not know; but he certainly never published it.

By this time—late in 1858—I was getting seriously to work on the *Daily Telegraph*. The paper was making its way. The idea of the proprietors was that it should be not only a thoroughly comprehensive newspaper, but also a miscellany of humorous and descriptive social essays, and in these respects a kind of daily *Household Words*. There were plenty of capable journalists about town in those days, much fitter than I was to undertake ordinary newspaper work; but the social leader-writer, with strong Liberal tendencies, was rare. Shirley Brooks would have been the very man for us; but he was fully occupied on the *Morning Chornicle* as a writer of leading articles and the parliamentary summary. Angus Reach would have been quite as welcome as a leader-writer, but he was dead; and Blanchard Jerrold, the son of Douglas, and one of Dickens's "young men," had succeeded his father as editor of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*. The only humorous leaders which had appeared in the *Times* for many years were written by the late Gilbert Abbot à Beckett. Pray understand that there was no

lack of lettered journalists, mostly University men, who were excellently well qualified to write what I may call the heavy political and economic leading articles. As a rule the political ones were slavishly founded on the antithetical style of the Letters of Junius, varied occasionally by imitations of Gibbon, of Hume, and of Mackintosh; while the economic essays were dreary *réchauffés* of Adam Smith and McCulloch. That which the Messrs. Levy yearned for was a staff of writers who possessed, first of all a lively style, and who, next, had seen something of the world, both in London and Paris, and who, finally, could turn out plenty of "copy." From these points of view I was precisely the kind of young man for them.

I did not go into society; but I knew all about it. With low life I was perhaps more conversant than I should have been: in fact, as I have elsewhere hinted, it would have been difficult to have found in London town a more outrageous young Mohock than I had been for the past five or six years; but, seeing that I am about to celebrate (D. V.) my sixty-sixth birthday; that my hair is unblanched; that I have a good appetite; that I am only partially deaf and partially blind; and that I can work eight hours a day "without turning a hair," I am entitled to hint that there is no use in moaning and groaning over the old days of Tom-and-Jerryism. I remember once, at a dinner at poor Edmund Yates's, his wife propounding to three of her male guests—her husband, Dion Boucicault, and myself—the grave question "whether we

were sorry"—you know what I mean; sorry in the "all-round" sense, unreservedly penitent, as Catholics must declare themselves to be in a *confession générale*. Boucicault was the first called upon to speak. The bright-witted dramatist—as all his friends are aware, the very model of sincerity and veracity—replied, with truth beaming from his expressive countenance, that he was deeply, unfeignedly sorry for all his sins. Then came my turn. I replied, diplomatically, that I was *going* to be sorry. *Mieux tard que jamais.* Then the dread query—remember, it was many years ago—was put to Edmund. He looked at us; he looked at the ladies; he looked into his plate, and then, bringing his closed hand down heavily on the table-cloth, he said, sternly and decisively, "No!"

As I have said, my epoch of idleness, or comparative idleness, had come to a close; and by the mercy of Providence there came over me a fierce hunger for literary labour and for study: which appetite, I rejoice to say, is still insatiable, and will not, I hope, be appeased till I die. In the early *Telegraph* period I used to write two leaders of fifteen hundred words each, every day save Saturday; and I can record one special twenty-four hours of hard work, in the course of which I managed to get through the two leaders *de rigueur*, together with the private view of the Royal Academy, the First Notice of the Exhibition itself, and an account of a pseudo-monstrosity exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, called the "Talking Fish." It was merely a very big seal, whose unusually strident

bark might, with the help of a little imagination, be construed into "How d'ye do?" and "What's o'clock?" In the evening I went to the annual dinner of the Royal Literary Fund; and afterwards I looked in at a charity ball at Willis's Rooms; then I repaired to the office of the *Daily Telegraph*, in St. Clement's Lane, to write accounts of both events, and concluded my labours about one in the morning.

Please to understand that I never mastered even the rudiments of shorthand; and it was from memory that I gave an outline of the speeches at the Literary Fund dinner, at which I think the Duc d'Aumale took the chair. Mr. Gladstone was also among the speakers, and, with the sublime impertinence of youth, I condensed the eloquent oration which he delivered into about twenty lines. Touching the leading articles, although I had been trained for six years by Dickens in strongly Radical principles, or at least in principles which were then thought to be strongly Radical, I wrote very rarely on politics in the *Daily Telegraph;* in fact, the political essays which I have composed during a journalistic career of more than forty years would not fill an octavo volume of a hundred pages. I have made many Radical speeches at public meetings, and over and over again I have been asked to offer myself as a candidate for Parliament; but I have never consented to stand, and I have never been a member of any political organisation; simply because my Radicalism has always been tinged with a strong leaven of Conservatism; and were I to profess myself to be a

Conservative I should find myself, before long, advocating Radical doctrines. If you have the habit of reading everything that you come across in half a dozen languages, it is with difficulty that you will remain a consistent partisan.

The subjects I wrote upon in the leading column of the *Daily Telegraph* were, comparatively speaking, innumerable, but they were nearly all either literary, artistic, social, or biographical. The political department of the paper was conducted, and admirably conducted, by two members of the gifted family of St. John. First we had a well-tried journalist, an accomplished gentleman, Mr. James Augustus St. John, the author of "Philosophy at the Foot of the Cross," whose powerful letters, forcibly Liberal in their tone, over the signature of "Greville Brooke" in the *Sunday Times*, almost achieved the popularity which had been gained by the letters of "Publicola," in the *Weekly Dispatch*. Mr. St. John had, unhappily, become blind. He wrote two or three leaders a week for us; and his subjects used to be sent to him at one o'clock in the afternoon at his house at St. John's Wood. One of his sons, Horace St. John, wrote political leaders every day, and was, besides, as prolific a producer of "copy" as I was. Another scion of the St. John family, Bayle, well known as an Oriental traveller, was our correspondent in Paris. As for Horace, one may say that he had been born in a newspaper office, just as I was all but born on the stage of a theatre. I remember the elder Mr. Levy telling me that when he first consented to accept a leading article

for the *Sunday Times* from young Horace St. John, whom he had not previously seen, the manuscript was brought to the office by a very nice boy, in a round jacket and turn-down collar—that nice boy being no other than Horace.

Our modes of working were totally different. Horace St. John would sit down at a table anywhere, and with the first writing implements that came to hand, dash off a leader in an hour's time, literally scrawling it on I know not how many pages of foolscap. I, on the other hand, could never write anything worth reading save in the minute characters I had been taught to trace when I was an engraver; and I was unable to write with any kind of ease or comfort unless I had my own paper, my own pens, and my own ink. Stephens's dark blue writing fluid was the ink specially favoured by Dickens, and his young men usually followed their chief in the way of writing-ink. We were orthodox in preferring quill pens to steel ones; and I used such pens for at least three years after I became a regular member of the staff of the *Daily Telegraph;* but I never could mend a pen, and the consequence was that in my cupboard there had accumulated many hundreds of useless quills. I abandoned quill pens altogether for a sufficiently absurd reason. I chanced upon an advertisement in the *Athenæum,* announcing that a lady of position was willing to mend any quantity of quill pens for very moderate remuneration. I wrote to the address given, and in return, I received a note couched, I may say, in a

somewhat acidulated tone, in which "X Y Z," writing in the third person, informed me that before she could communicate her terms to me I must tell her whether my reply to her advertisement was serious, or whether I intended to make fun. I put the letter in the fire, and gave up quill pens.

I have a little more to say with regard to my early days on *The Daily Telegraph*. There existed, not only among the Conservatives, who thought that the cheap daily press could only be the prelude of sedition and revolution, but also among a large number of journalists, and Liberal journalists too, of high standing, the most violent of prejudices against the new order of journals which were usually contemptuously called the "penny papers." Dickens himself, a Liberal of the Liberals, expressed but very half-hearted approval of the agitation for the abolition of the paper duty; and it is a most amusing fact that members of the staffs of such expensive journals as *The Times*, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Morning Post*, *The Morning Herald*, and *The Morning Advertiser*, looked down with aversion and disdain on the contributors to the "penny press." In those days there was a kind of informal *cénacle*, or club, of newspaper-men held every night in an upper room of a tavern called the "Red Lion," in the Strand. I have seen William Howard Russell there. I was first taken to this select gathering by my friend already mentioned, Henry Rumsey Forster, of *The Morning Post;* but the veteran journalists, especially those connected with the *Herald* and the *Post*, vehemently protested against the

young man known to be connected with a penny paper being allowed to join them.

One of the most indignant of the protestants was the late George Hodder, who had something to do with the staff of the *Herald*—I think in the police reporting department — and who was the author of an amusing little book called "New Mornings at Bow Street," illustrated by, among others, John Leech and Kenny Meadows, and which was by no means an unworthy successor to the first and famous "Mornings," illustrated by George Cruikshank. Dear old George Hodder lived to be my intimate friend, and to do a good deal of useful hack-work for me. The drollest episode of all in connection with the horror felt, or professed to be felt, by the established newspaper men at the audacity of the penny journalist presuming to associate with them, occurred on the occasion of that festival of the Literary Fund, of which I have already made mention. I "did" public dinners for an entire summer season; but the one at which the Duc d' Aumale presided was, I imagine, the first public banquet that I attended in a professional capacity. It was then the hospitable and pleasant practice of the proprietors of the tavern or rooms at which public dinners took place to ask the reporters, when the principal speakers of the evening had had their say, to repair to a private room, where cigars and brandies and soda were provided for them, and where they could transcribe at least a portion of their shorthand notes. The privilege was one highly valued by the gentlemen of the Press,

seeing that there was no smoking whatsoever at public dinners. The Prince Consort detested tobacco; and the Prince of Wales was still too young to be able to civilise upper and middle class English society in the way of enjoying their cigars or their cigarettes as soon after the dessert as the Royal toasts had been disposed of. When, at the dinner of which I speak, an adjournment was made to the private room, my *confrères* — at least, I thought them my brethren, but they were not of the same mind—flatly refused to admit me to their company. But the landlord, wise in his generation, and knowing that the *Daily Telegraph* was rapidly progressing in power and popularity, and that a notice in its columns would do him no harm, put his foot down, and pithily informed the gentlemen of the Press that they might go away if they liked, but that the private room was his, that he had invited me—I think he called me Mr. Saunders—to smoke a cigar there, and that there I should remain. Which I quietly did.

CHAPTER XXX.

MATRIMONIAL.

"Gaslight and Daylight" and "Looking at Life"—Night Houses—Panton Street, Haymarket, and its Patron Saint—Mr. and Mrs. "Jehoshaphat"—A Split Nose: A Coincidence—Bidding Good-bye to Bohemia—Marrying in Haste not to Repent at Leisure—Settling Down in Brompton Square—D. G. Rossetti and His Models—Taking an Interest in Things Feminine—Choice Dinners.

I WAS making by this time a good deal of money, possibly fifteen or sixteen pounds a week; since I was not only writing every day in the *Daily Telegraph*, but was also a constant contributor to the *Welcome Guest;* and besides, the papers from which Dickens had removed the embargo, were being rapidly republished in book form, and were bringing me pieces of silver and pieces of gold. In particular, Messrs. Chapman and Hall published a collection of these essays under the title, "Gaslight and Daylight;" and Routledge's brought out another batch in a stout octavo volume with the title, "Looking at Life." Moreover, I found a publisher, I forget his name, for my disastrously bad novel, "The Baddington Peerage." My name was now prominently before the public, and in no unfavourable light. There was, however, a good deal of the old Adam remaining in me, and I was still a denizen of Bohemia, although it was of Bohemia where

you had plenty of money to spend, instead of one in which you are often in dire stress for half-a-crown.

The West End of London was at the time infested by dens of iniquity, known as "night houses," where half the young members of the aristocracy might be seen night after night paying fifteen shillings a bottle for gooseberry or rhubarb champagne. Several of the most notorious of these houses were in Panton Street, off the Haymarket.

The locality was a historical one in the annals of London dissipation. It was late one night in Panton Street that Baretti, the compiler of a once widely consulted English-Italian Dictionary, and the friend of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick, and the Thrales, got embroiled with a group of London bullies, and, in self-defence, drew his pocket-knife and stabbed one of them. The wound proved mortal, and Baretti was tried at the Old Bailey for murder. Garrick, Johnson, Goldsmith, and, I think, Edmund Burke, were among the witnesses called to character; and the poor Italian lexicographer was acquitted. The very origin of Panton Street itself was "shady." Late in the reign of Charles II. there was a notorious professional gambler, by the name of Colonel Thomas Panton, who had fought on the Cavalier side in the Civil War. One night, at a gaming house called Piccadilly Hall, the site of which was near the Criterion, Colonel Panton won a prodigious stake—so prodigious, indeed, that he determined thenceforth to relinquish the dice-box for good and all. Wonderful to relate, he adhered to his resolution; and

invested his winnings in land and in building operations. He built Panton Street and Panton Square, at the top of the Haymarket, and he died in the odour of respectability.

The modern Panton Street, since the suppression of the night houses, and the building of the Comedy Theatre, has been the most decorous and most reputable of thoroughfares. But its morals were scarcely unimpeachable in the year 1859, and for a few years afterwards. One of those houses was kept by a gentleman whom I will call Mr. Jehoshaphat. I was in his Hall of Dazzling Light one morning about three; I had a dispute with Mrs. Jeshoshaphat, touching the champagne at fifteen shillings a bottle. Mr. Jehoshaphat interfered; there was a fight, I took the floor, Mr. Jehoshaphat kneeling on my chest; and then, by a cleverly directed blow with his left hand, the fingers of which were plentifully garnished with diamond rings, he split my nose throughout its entire length. Then he dexterously rolled me into the street. Fortunately for me the next house was an establishment of a similar nature, of which the proprietor was a certain Mr. "Jack" Coney—altogether, considering the equivocal profession which he followed, not at all a bad fellow. Of course, I was bleeding like a pig. He picked me up, tied a table napkin tightly round my face, put me in a cab, and took me to Charing Cross Hospital, where the house surgeon swiftly sewed up my damaged nasal organ. As a medical gentleman afterwards succinctly observed, "the flesh on my nose presented the aspect of

a split mackerel ready for the gridiron." Then Mr. "Jack" Coney took me home to my lodgings in Salisbury Street.

I have often read an apocryphal account of this incident, in which it was stated that about ten in the morning I despatched a letter to my colleague, James Hannay, asking him to send me forthwith "a surgeon and a guinea." As a matter of fact, the guinea and the surgeon story has been told by Hannay of another party in an article in the *Westminster Review*, on Bohemia, before my little catastrophe occurred.

I have often said that the world is not such a big village after all. More than a quarter of a century after that nocturnal, or rather matutinal affray in Panton Street, I happened to be at Melbourne, in the colony of Victoria, at Menzies' Hotel, then one of the few really well-appointed hotels in the Australian Colonies. We were waited upon at breakfast by a youth whose head was adorned with many sable and glossy ringlets, and who told us confidentially that he had but recently arrived in the Land of the Golden Fleece, and that his name was Jehoshaphat. "Eh, what?" I exclaimed; "I think I knew somebody of that name some years ago." "Yes, sir, you did," replied the many-ringleted youth, with a courteous bow; "which I am the nevvy of the gentleman which had the honour to split your conk open at his saloon in Panton Street."

Mr. Jehoshaphat, with his well-directed "facer," administered with the diamond-ring-bedizened fist, did

me unconsciously as much good as it was possible for one human being to do another. My wound healed rapidly. I think that in a fortnight I was able to leave the house; but meanwhile I had been seriously thinking that it was about time to bid good-bye to Bohemia. So, after a few days' holiday with my mother at Brighton, I went and married the girl of my heart. I had known her ever since she was a child; and I think that when I asked her to name the wedding-day, she called me "Sir," when she expressed her opinion that the following Monday would be quite a nice time for the wedding. It took a little longer than that; as I had to purchase a licence, and she had to reside for a certain number of days on the other side of the river—a whimsical fancy having possessed me that I would not be married in the county of Middlesex.

Of whereabouts in Southwark or Lambeth we were eventually united, I have not the slightest remembrance; but I know that when the ceremony was at an end, shortly before noon, the beadle gave the bride away, and the pew-opener was her bridesmaid. I put her in a hansom, and bade her engage some nice, quiet, furnished apartments at Brompton. Then I walked over Southwark Bridge to my work at the *Daily Telegraph;* and on my way, at a second-hand bookseller's I bought for sixpence a copy of the first edition of Mrs. Glasse's Cookery-book, of which scarcely half-a-dozen copies are known to be in existence, and it is now worth a great deal of money.

So you see I secured two treasures in one happy forenoon.

My wife was so young and so pretty that she experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining the nice, quiet, furnished apartments which she sought; and, indeed, she laughingly told me, when I met her on the morrow of our union, that she thought the best thing she could do was to wear our marriage certificate as a brooch. It did not, however, come to that pass. We obtained the necessary accommodation at a house in Brompton Square; and, oddly enough, as I have already said, the landlady was the widow of Morris Barnett, the actor, dramatist, and critic.

We were very happy in Brompton Square. Thackeray, who, with his two daughters, lived in Onslow Square close by, used to come and see us; and another of our most frequent visitors was Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who gave us a photo of his wonderful pen-and-ink drawing of Mary Magdalen at the house of Simon the Pharisee. I have it, now, with the autograph inscription to my wife hanging in my study; and I am glad to say the photograph has not faded. Those who are familiarly cognisant with Rossetti's work are aware that for the face and figure of the Magdalen he used two models: the head and arms of the figure were studied from a delightful actress who is still living, and whom I have had the honour to know for many years; the remainder was studied from a typically pre-Raphaelite model, immortalised by the artist in his poem called "Jenny."

Jules Janin, the famous dramatic critic of the *Journal des Debats*, got into terrible trouble with his journalistic *confrères* because he minutely described the occurrences of his wedding-day, and descanted most effusively on the personal charms and the sweet character of his wife. I hope that my readers will do me the justice to admit that I have not been very diffuse on the subject of my own nuptials; but as it happens that this book is the unvarnished story of my Life, I should be false to the scheme which I laid down for myself many years ago, when I first thought of writing my Life at all, were I not to say something about the great change that came over me when I had to work for somebody else besides myself; and when my toil was requited by the devotedness and love of a young and intelligent partner. A bachelor must be, to a certain extent, selfish; he cannot help it; he thinks of himself in some shape or another from morning till night; and selfishness begets self-indulgence and hard-heartedness. It is not so with a widower; he has enjoyed the bliss of wedded life. Is there a nobler passage in Johnson's letter to Chesterfield than that in which he says: "The notice you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; *till I am solitary and cannot impart it;* till I am known and do not want it"? To my mind it is impossible to be really happy unless you can impart at least one moiety of your happiness to others. Never mind what the pleasure is—a ticket for the opera,

a bunch of flowers, a new garment, a dinner at Greenwich, a drive in the park—it will not be thoroughly enjoyed unless you can share it with somebody you love. It was my great good fortune to espouse a pious, charitable, and compassionate young woman; and she did her best, during a union of five-and-twenty years, to weed out of me my besetting sin of selfishness, and to soften and dulcify a temper naturally violent and unreasoning, and of which the normal brutality was often aggravated to verbal ferocity.

Another noticeable and, to me, advantageous feature in the change that came over me was that I began to take a lively interest in feminine things. Those who know me are aware that I am the very reverse of a "Molly"; but during the five or six years of my Bohemianism, poverty-stricken or affluent, I had been almost entirely severed from the companionship of what I may call "nice girls." My dearest sister had died of consumption; I had two maiden cousins alive; but they were much older than I was, and I rarely saw them. My mother was far advanced in years; she had given up teaching, and it was only when I went to see her at Brighton that I had an opportunity of conversing with ladies in that grade of society with which I had been familiar from my boyhood. When I got married my life seemed to have put on an entirely different and radiant hue; it was full of Music—for is not the constant talk of the woman you love the sweetest melody that a man can listen to? I grew interested in bonnets; I took an interest in skirts; I loved to

chat and to argue with my wife about her new frocks and mantles. I took in the *Follet* and the *Ladies' Gazette of Fashion;* and my subscriptions to those journals led in all probability to my becoming a zealous student of the history of female costume, and to my possessing, at present, perhaps the largest collection of pattern-books and fashion-plates, ancient and modern, of any private man in England.

When I first went to live in Brompton Square, I don't think I had twenty books in the world. If I wanted any recondite information I repaired to the reading-room of the British Museum. Cookery, again, became a topic of theoretical and practical attention in my young married days; but in my own case culinary study was not a novelty, but a revival. In another book I have described how my mother caused all her children to be taught to cook; and until about 1851, when my brother Charles and I kept house together, we did all the cooking at our lodgings in Camden Town. During the dark days of the long nightmare of Bohemianism, I did not forget how to cook, but my culinary faculty was in a state of suspended animation. After my marriage the cunning of the *archimageiros* came back, unbidden, to me; and it was one of the earliest and most delightful of my experiences as a Benedict to teach Beatrice how to cook. The poor soul was absolutely ignorant of the difficult and humanising art. Roasting a joint, boiling a piece of fish, grilling a chop, frying a rasher of bacon, and making a plain pudding constituted the aggregate of her culinary powers. Mrs.

Barnett's cooking was of the ordinary lodging-house type—that is to say, detestable; but we soon altered all that.

I bought in the Brompton Road a very nice little *batterie de cuisine* made of brown Wedgwood ware; and with the aid of a spirit-lamp and some charcoal embers we managed to get up the most dainty little repasts imaginable, without troubling Mrs. Barnett and her food-spoiler at all. My wife's capacity for cooking developed with surprising rapidity. She became, as the years passed along, a veritable *cordon bleu;* and between 1875 and 1885, when we had a roomy old house in Mecklenburgh Square, and I was prosperous and could afford to be hospitable, we concocted a number of lunches and dinners which won the admiration of some of the most distinguished *gourmets* in London. The manner of our procedure was as follows. I settled the *menu*. If there was any made dish or any sauces with which she was unacquainted, she asked me for information, and I gave it her. Then she took three days to "think out" the dinner. Afterwards she would repair to her laboratory, which was a little room overlooking the garden, and which we had fitted up with shelves, on which she arranged all her condiments, her miniature stew-pans and braising-pans and sauce-pans, and so forth. The place came to look at last like that gastronomic library which forms the frontispiece to one of the volumes of Grimod de la Reynière's "Almanach des Gourmands," in which the articles on the shelves are not books, but hams, capons, *pâtés de*

foie gras, pots of conserves, bottles of oil and vinegar, and other creature comforts. In that laboratory, standing before a broad kitchen table, and aided by one of the neatest-handed parlourmaids I ever knew, she used to accomplish the artistic portion of the dinners. The ingredients for the made dishes were mixed; there was white stock and there was brown stock simmering over the charcoal; the sauces were all made, labelled, and placed in different *casseroles* in a *bain marie* pan of boiling water; and all Mrs. Cook in the regions below had to do was to make the soup, dress the fish and vegetables, and roast the joints and game. We had a worthy soul, at thirty pounds per annum, who stayed with us several years; and when I went to Australia, in 1885, she was fit to be cook at a London club. She used to beg and pray to be taught to make sauces and *entrées*, and when my wife had any leisure she would instruct her; but on the occasion of an exceptionally *recherché* banquet, she herself, and she only, was *la saucière*. This is not a digression, although I am well aware that my autobiographical watch has been going a great deal too fast.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE *GREAT EASTERN.*

The *Leviathan* Re-christened—Captain Harrison, "the Atlantic Navigator"—An Explosion—A Ghastly Spectacle—Lord Stafford's Resourcefulness—My Narrow Escape—The *Great Eastern's* Ill Luck—A Volunteer Review in Hyde Park—Orsini's Attempt on the Life of Napoleon III.—The Trial of Dr. Claude Bernard—"Mr. Leighton" and "Mr. Millais" in the March Past—"Defence, not Defiance"—A Memorable *Levée*—Edmund Yates and the "Fifty Guinea Hogarth."

We must hark back, if you please, to 1859, and the beginning of the month of September in that year. A gigantic steam galleon designed by the Second Brunel and built by Scott Russell and Co., at Millwall, had been completed, and was to start for her trial trip from her moorings at Deptford to Portland Roads. The huge creature, which weighed 12,000 tons, and on the construction of which more than a quarter of a million sterling had been expended, had taken from the 3rd of November, 1857, to the end of January, 1858, to launch. For a short time her name was the *Leviathan;* but it occurred to some wiseacre that it was wicked to give a ship a Biblical name; so her appellation was changed to the *Great Eastern.* Is it wicked, I wonder, to call a toy houseboat full of wooden beasts and birds a Noah's Ark, and to dub the little wooden puppets in the long gaberdines Shem, Ham, and Japhet? By the way, did you ever see Noah in a Noah's Ark? I

never did. There is one figure in an ample skirt whom children call "Mrs. Noah," but the Admiral is for some strange reason absent from the craft which he so ably commanded. I had some slight acquaintance with Brunel the Second, and remember that he continually wore a black velvet skull cap; he was a martyr, poor gentleman, to neuralgia, and died a few days after the disastrous trip of the *Great Eastern* to the south coast.

Mr. John Scott Russell, who did not die until 1882, was in the prime of life in 1859; I knew him well; he was a man who had had varied experiences, and fortunes as varied. At one period, I believe, he had been a writer on scientific subjects in the *Athenæum*. In 1855 he was senior partner in a great ship-building firm at Millwall; and to his care, in order to receive some practical training in engineering, that Herbert Ingram, M.P. for Boston and proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*, had confided one of his sons, now Sir William Ingram, Bart., M.P. The *Daily Telegraph* commissioned me to write an account of the trial trip of the *Great Eastern*. I joined the great ship, not at Deptford, but at Erith; travelling down, by the way, with Dickens, who was on his way to his house at Gad's Hill. There was a goodly array of guests on board the gigantic steamship. Among them I remember the Marquis of Stafford, afterwards Duke of Sutherland, Lord Alfred Paget, the Earl of Mountcharles, and Mr., now Sir Edward, Reed, M.P. Who represented the *Times* I am unable to remember;

but Mr. Murphy was there for the *Daily News*, and Mr. John Hollingshead for the *Morning Post*. Herbert Ingram was likewise of the party; and to his presence on board I always attributed the pleasing circumstance that on the 8th September my life was not brought to a sudden conclusion. The commander of the vessel was Captain Harrison, who, from the repeated and uniformly successful voyages which he had made in the service of the Cunard Company, had earned the proud title of the "Atlantic Navigator." He was a tall, handsome man of gallant bearing, as brave as a lion, and in moments of danger as cool as a cucumber.

The first day all went well on board the *Great Eastern*, which was said to be doing from eighteen to twenty knots an hour; but on the afternoon of the next day a dreadful catastrophe occurred. Dinner being over, some of the guests went on deck for smoking or promenading purposes; but there remained in the saloon a somewhat numerous body of passengers, mainly journalists. By this time the prejudice entertained by the members of the regular press against the writers in the "penny papers" had begun to subside; and my colleagues suggested that I should propose the health of Mr. Herbert Ingram. I was as yet a blundering and confused speaker; still I was becoming used to the habit of getting on my hind legs. I was telling my hearers how much Mr. Ingram had done for illustrated journalism, when a horrible noise was audible and the dinner-table was littered with splinters of glass from

shattered skylights and ports. We all rushed on deck; there was a cry that the boiler of the donkey-engine had burst. The case was worse than that.

Fortunately, we had no ladies on board; but there was a handsome ladies' cabin through which passed one of the funnels. To cool the atmosphere of the cabin the funnel was encased in an apparatus called a "steam jacket;" and the intervening space was kept filled with water. Unfortunately, as in the instance of the Balaclava Charge, "someone had blundered." The "steam jacket" was unprovided with a safety valve, or if it existed it was closed: the consequence being that the over-heated water passed into the state of steam and the "steam jacket" burst with a tremendous explosion. The greatest amount of damage was done in the stoke-hole, in which ten firemen lost their lives, while a large number of other persons were more or less seriously injured. This dreadful fatality happened while the steamer was off Beachy Head. Naturally there reigned for a while something closely resembling a panic among the passengers. There was a rumour that the steering gear had collapsed, and that the ship was drifting on shore. Luckily this was not so; and Captain Harrison's coolness and presence of mind very soon enabled him to reassure his guests that the worst was over; while the chief engineer—I forget his name, but he was a Scotchman—did his best to set matters right in the engine-room. Often in after years, when I have seen Sir Eyre Massey Shaw, the late commander of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, coolly, calmly, and

dauntlessly wrestling with what the penny-a-liners are laughed at for calling "the devouring element," but which is surely an element, and as surely devours, I have thought of Captain Harrison, of the *Great Eastern*, cool, calm, and determined.

I have seen many harrowing spectacles both in war and in peace in my time; but never, perhaps, have I witnessed a spectacle ghastlier and more pitiable than that which presented itself when the wounded firemen were brought up out of the hideous chasm made by the explosion, and laid out in the saloon. They were not burnt. They were simply scalded through and through by the steam; and it was from this scalding, aggravated by the shock given to the system, that most of the wounded died. One poor creature rolled in his agony off the couch on to the floor; one of the guests tried to help him up; but to his horror the flesh of the man's hands came bodily off in those of the person who was trying to succour him; and the bones of the stoker's hands were revealed in skeleton nakedness. Whether we had any medical men on board I do not recollect; but this I remember well, and shall remember, I hope, until my dying day. I speak of the ministrations, equally tender and heroic, of the Marquis of Stafford, to these scalded miserables.

A happy thought occurred to him of how their dreadful anguish might at least be alleviated. It was to encase the bodies of the wounded firemen and others in sheets of cotton-wool soaked in oil. There was plenty of oil on board, but alas! cotton-wool was not, at

first, procurable; and oakum would have served the desired purpose only very clumsily. Suddenly Lord Stafford exclaimed, "By Jove! there must be wool in those curtains." In an instant a hundred hands were dragging down and ripping asunder the sumptuous damask curtains of the saloon and the side cabins; and these curtains were found to be lined with wool, scores of yards of which were at once at the disposal of those who were tending the wounded. Very few of the guests turned into their berths till sunrise. It was a night of groans and shrieks, of agony bravely borne, but at times too great for human endurance; but the sheets of cotton-wool soaked in oil did their beneficent work; and towards morning some of the most direly injured were sunk in blessed sleep.

You may wonder why I attributed my own escape from a violent death to the presence on board of Mr. Herbert Ingram. The briefest of explanations will suffice. I intended after dinner to retire to my berth, lie down, read a book, and, perhaps, have a doze. Heaven so willed it that I made an after-dinner speech, which was interrupted by the explosion. There would have been no more "G. A. S." if I had sought my berth immediately after dinner; for my cabin was blown to pieces. When we came into Portland Roads, about ten the next morning, the *Great Eastern* was soon surrounded by pleasure-boats and yachts, gaily decked with flags, and full of ladies in radiant toilettes, while bands of music discoursed festive melodies. But the music died away into awful

silence when those who had come out to welcome us saw that we were flying our colours half-mast, and that we had ten dead bodies on board. I made the best of my way to Weymouth, and there was a rush to the telegraph office; for most of us had given hostages to fortune, and were thinking of the fear and consternation which must have been convulsing those dear to us.

Was there ever a more unfortunate ship than this colossal sea monster, the *Great Eastern?* The *Leviathan* forsooth? It would have been nearer the mark had she been christened in the outset the *Disastrous.* Early in the ensuing November, I ran down one morning with Alfred Dickens, inspecting engineer to the Board of Health, and who had been a pupil of Brunel, to Southampton, to renew my acquaintance with Captain Harrison. The *Great Eastern,* after sailing to Holyhead, and weathering very satisfactorily a terrific storm, proceeded to Southampton for the winter. We lunched on board with Captain Harrison; but luck was against the commander as well as the ship, and the brave, devoted mariner, a very few weeks afterwards, was drowned, close to shore, in a puddle, so to speak, of the Solent. The big ship made a voyage across the Atlantic, but, on returning to England, she got into the hands of the sheriff's officers. Subsequently, on her way to and from New York, she was half wrecked in a terrific gale, and ran on a rock near Long Island, and injured her keel badly. She was again seized, on behalf of her crew, who claimed unpaid wages. She never paid a dividend to any of her

successive series of shareholders. In 1861, this unparalleled steamship was put up for sale at thirty thousand pounds, and bought in; then it was proposed to employ her as a coal-hulk at Gibraltar; then she was sold for twenty-six thousand pounds, and was made a public show in the Mersey; but the magistrates refused to grant a drink licence for the exhibition, and the wretched ship lumbered round to the Clyde, and was sold to a firm of metal-brokers for sixteen thousand five hundred pounds—the *Disastrous*, with a vengeance! This ill-fated ship did, however, a few distinct acts of public service. She laid successfully the French, the Atlantic, and the Indian cables; and her exploits in the last instance have been ably chronicled by my friend, Mr. Joseph Charles Parkinson, who, in his capacity as a journalist, was on board the *Great Eastern* on her voyage to India.

Another important commission which I received belongs to the year 1860, and to the month of June thereof, when Her Majesty the Queen reviewed, in Hyde Park, a force of more than eighteen thousand Volunteers. The *Daily Telegraph* had a great deal to do with the promotion of the Volunteer movement, which was at first either violently opposed or contemptuously sneered at. Even the usually far-seeing and right-minded *Mr. Punch* had a good many flings at the nascent, or rather, renascent, idea of a volunteer army. John Leech had a standing butt, whom he called the "Brook Green Volunteer," a preposterous creature who was depicted under all kinds of ridiculous circumstances. The

Brook Green Volunteer in Leech's drawings threw out skirmishers in the shape of his wife and children; deployed; executed skilful flank movements, and formed himself in a square to receive cavalry. Then there was the irresistibly comic scene of a barber in full Volunteer uniform, popping his head in at the door of his shaving-room, and saying to his assistant, "Alexander, when you have finished titivating the gentleman you must come to drill." But the Volunteer movement triumphed over all the sneers and all the disparaging criticism of the old gentlemen at the Service clubs, and the bantering of a section of the press; it grew and grew with astonishing rapidity to universality of acceptance. There cannot be any doubt that the eagerness of young Englishmen of the middle and working classes to be enrolled, and drilled, and disciplined as unpaid defenders of their country was, in a large measure, due to a vague but widely spread apprehension that France meant mischief towards the British Empire, and had meant such mischief ever since the attempt of Felice Orsini and his accomplices to assassinate Napoleon III.

It happened that I was in Paris at the time when that attempt was made. I was dining one evening with some friends at the Café Riche, a once famous restaurant, but which has now been turned into a garish *brasserie*, or beer-drinking saloon, at the corner of the Rue Lepeletier, in which street all my readers may not be aware was situated the old Grand Opera. We had got to the stage of coffee and liqueurs, when we

heard three successive and violent concussions as if three huge doors had been slammed to. A minute or two afterwards the restaurant was invaded by the police, who practically arrested everybody in the room; but we had all either passports or visiting cards to show; and, after a brief detention, we were allowed to go about our business. Then came the absurd episode of the French colonels sending back the decorations of the Bath conferred upon them by the Queen, and vehemently imploring the Emperor to lead them to the shores of perfidious Albion, whence they could track the murderous conspirators to their lair.

I saw one of these conspirators, a Dr. Claude Bernard, tried at the Old Bailey under the provisions of an Act which had been pushed through two very unwilling Houses of Parliament. Mr. Edwin James defended Bernard; and his speech, strongly stirring as it was, had certainly a strong element of "high falutin" about it. I can see him now, waving his right hand in exaggerated forensic style, and thundering forth an inflated allusion to "four hundred thousand French infantry, their bayonets blazing in the morning sun," preparing to invade England. Dr. Bernard was acquitted. The crowded court cheered; the people in the corridors cheered; and the shouts were taken up by the mob in the Old Bailey, and went rolling down in a roaring tide to Ludgate. As for Dr. Bernard, I remember that just before he left the dock a free man, he struck his black kid-gloved hand on the ledge before him and exclaimed, "I have conspired, and I will always conspire." Fortunately he

had kept that little admission to himself before the jury pronounced him not guilty. Out of all these things grew stalwart, valid, vascular, the Volunteer Movement, the strengthening of which was wonderfully accelerated by some verses in the *Times*, long ascribed to Martin Farquhar Tupper, the writer of that pre-eminently silly book, "Proverbial Philosophy," but subsequently acknowledged by Alfred Tennyson as his own. The allusion to Napoleon III. as the "Faithful Ally; but only the Devil knows what he means"—and the refrain of

> "Form, form, riflemen, form
> Ready, be ready to meet the storm,"

must have attracted thousands of stout young fellows to the ranks of the Volunteers.

The midsummer review was a magnificent success. There was an Embassy from Morocco in London at the time; and it was curious to see the tall, gaunt, olive-skinned Moorish Emirs, in their snowy-white burnouses, standing up in their landau to witness the march past. Her Majesty and the Prince Consort likewise honoured the Victoria Rifles—a corps which had been the nucleus from which the movement had been formed. They had been originally the first Middlesex Volunteers, and dated from 1803, as the Duke of Cumberland's sharpshooters; and they maintained their organisation as a rifle club when other Volunteer corps were disbanded. In 1835 they were permitted by the Duchess of Kent, the august mother of our beloved Sovereign, to take the title of the Royal Victoria Rifle Club, hence,

I should say, the enthusiastic applause bestowed on them at the review.

Among the other battalions which marched past I noted the Artists' corps, and the pleasant murmur that fluttered through a standful of ladies of "There's Mr. Leighton; there's Mr. Millais!" Then cheers, mingled with laughter, were audible, as the Inns of Court corps marched past. Of course, these legal warriors had already had conferred on them the title of "The Devil's Own"; and one of my colleagues declared that when the Inns of Court braves approached, the massed bands at the saluting point struck up the inspiriting air of "Go to the Devil and Shake Yourself." The authorities were very civil to the Press on this occasion; and we had a large tribune, or stand, allotted to us, in front of which were gathered, on the greensward, a large number of officers of the regulars in full uniform. There was a good deal of laughing and chattering among these gentlemen before the review commenced; so up rode H.R.H. the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, who apostrophised the officers in somewhat vigorous language; but in vain did the Royal Duke objurgate; the gentlemen in scarlet and gold and blue and gold adopted the very crafty tactics of giving him three hearty cheers; whereat the Royal Ranger of Hyde Park rode away with a smile upon his honest features.

That review in Hyde Park brought me in a considerable sum of money. I wrote a couple of columns or so in the *Daily Telegraph*, describing the pageant to

the best of my ability; and a day or two afterwards there came to me a pushing young gentleman named Edward Tinsley, who, in partnership with his brother William, had just set up a publishing business in Catherine Street, Strand. He saw his way to making a shilling book out of my narrative of the review, and I saw my way to accepting the very liberal terms which he offered me. So the little book was published, and it had a prodigious sale; but for what reason I know not. I have never since been able to set eyes upon it. I must go back a few months in touching on the subject of the army of unpaid defenders, whose motto was "Defence, not Defiance."

It was late in June that the Royal Review took place in Hyde Park, but, early in the preceding March, no less than 2,500 Volunteer officers were presented to the Queen at Buckingham Palace. That memorable *levée* is additionally impressed on my mind by a mishap which, at the time, was productive of considerable embarrassment to me. We were living, at the time, in furnished apartments in Sloane Street:—a parlour and bedroom on the ground floor, with an annexe running into the garden, which I converted into a library—for I was beginning to buy books as well as to love them. Edmund Yates, then a clerk in the Secretary's Office at St. Martin's-le-Grand, was an ensign in the Post Office corps, of which, I think, Viscount Bury, the late Earl of Albemarle, was the commander. When the *levée* was over, Edmund, in full Volunteer panoply, called on us in Sloane Street. It was tea time. I was

away at the *Daily Telegraph* at work, but Ensign Yates very gladly accepted my wife's invitation to partake of the cup which cheers but not inebriates. The *Cornhill Magazine* was then in the spring of its bright career; and its publisher, Mr. George Smith, had accentuated his appreciation of "The Hogarth Papers," which I was writing for Thackeray, by presenting me with a superb elephant folio of the complete works of the great English painter, engraver, and moralist. This tome used to be known as the "fifty-guinea Hogarth," and is still worth a considerable sum. My wife, delighted with the gift made to her husband, was showing Edmund the tall tome with womanly pride and joy.

But woe is me! The teacup slipped from Edmund's hand, and four of the choicest plates in the "Marriage à la Mode" were saturated with tea. He made haste the following morning to send for the volume in order to have it treated by a firm in Rathbone Place, who undertook to take the stains out of old books. But alas! my "Hogarth," which was sold with the rest of my library during a two years' absence in foreign parts between 1865 and 1867, never recovered its pristine beauty.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE STARTING OF *TEMPLE BAR*.

The "Hogarth Papers"—A Drawing of the Boy Hogarth at Work—*Temple Bar* and its Staff—Mr. Robert Buchanan—The Austins—*The Saturday Review* and its Onslaughts—Sir Wm. Harcourt—Abandoning Literature for Journalism—"Echoes of the Week"—Peter Cunningham and Frederick Dickens—"Jack" Reeve—Finding the Hermit of "Tom Tiddler's Ground."

YES; the *Cornhill* was in full swing; and the "Hogarth Papers," at which I could only work at night, were bringing me between fifty and sixty pounds a month; and although published anonymously, they had brought me a good deal of public recognition from high-class journals. With respect to these essays I had cause once more to be grateful for the personal kindness of Mr. George Smith. For one of the instalments of the papers in question, which dealt with the career of Hogarth as an apprentice to Mr. Gamble, silversmith, of Cranbourne Alley, Mr. Smith suggested that I should make a page-drawing on wood, representing little boy Hogarth in his master's workshop, busy in engraving a coat-of-arms on a silver plateau. I believe the idea had suggested itself to Mr. George Smith through the circumstance of Thackeray having just then bought at Garrard's, in the Haymarket, a small silver salver of undeniably early Georgian make, and engraved with a shield and crest. Thackeray was pleased to fancy that the plateau might have been engraved by

Hogarth himself. That may have been a delusion; but it was assuredly a harmless and a delightful one. I made the drawing according to Mr. Smith's suggestion. It was summer time. I had been to the Opera; but I went to work at midnight, and I had finished my drawing by six o'clock in the morning. I knew what I was about with respect to an engraver's workshop; and the drawing was minutely technical. There was the little lad, perched on a high stool, with the silver plate before him on a leather cushion, and delving into it with his burin. The light from the window was modified by passing through a screen of tissue paper framed with wire. Scattered about him were all the tools pertaining to his craft; and a little anvil and hammer to "knock up" the plate if it had been incised too deeply; while in the background, through another window, you saw the silversmith's shop itself, with Mr. Gamble behind the counter exhibiting a choice article of plate to a belle of the period, bewitching in powder and patches. I was very proud of the drawing when I had finished it; but somehow or another it failed to meet with the approval of Thackeray, who came to see us after breakfast. I contentedly acquiesced in his decision that the drawing was not good enough for the *Magazine*. I should have acquiesced in anything else that he had asked me or told me not to do; and I should have just taken a handkerchief dipped in fair water and wiped the entire drawing off the box-wood block had not my wife passionately entreated me not to destroy it, but to let her have it, in order that she might frame it.

It chanced that Mr. George Smith called on us that afternoon, while I, as usual, was absent at work. He persuaded my wife to let him take away the block with him. I think that he must have exerted his great influence with the conductor of the *Cornhill;* for the next number contained a beautifully executed wood-engraving of my drawing: the only alteration made in which was a portfolio of prints lying loose on the floor. Mr. George Smith gave me five-and-twenty pounds for my six hours' hard labour; but his generosity did not end there. The drawing, with my name attached to it, was produced in the great *édition de luxe* of the works of William Makepeace Thackeray; and right proud am I that just one tiny morsel of my poor handiwork should make part of that great literary and artistic monument.

The "Hogarth Papers" ran in the *Cornhill* for, I think, eleven months. Thackeray wanted some more articles from me, but not a serial; and I was debating in my mind on what subject I could most amusingly descant in a paper of from sixteen to twenty pages in length, when Mr. John Maxwell, now become a prosperous publisher in Fleet Street, informed me that he was thinking of starting a new magazine on the same lines as the *Cornhill,* but without illustrations; and he proposed that I should be the editor of the new venture, and that my name, as its Conductor, should appear on the title-page. I thought the proposal was not one to be slighted, as it would bring me not only a handsome salary as editor, but remuneration at the rate of thirty shillings or two pounds a page for my contributions; and

I had the plot of another novel in my head. Thackeray and I parted on the best of terms, and he even said some friendly words about the rival magazine in one of his "Roundabout Papers." To this periodical I gave the name of *Temple Bar;* and from a rough sketch of mine of the old Bar which blocked the way in Fleet Street, Mr. Percy Macquoid drew an admirable frontispiece. As a motto I *imagined* a quotation from Boswell, "And now, Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "we will take a walk down Fleet Street." To the best of my knowledge and belief Dr. Johnson never said a word about taking a walk down Fleet Street; but my innocent *supercherie* was, I fancy, implicitly believed in for at least a generation by the majority of magazine readers.

Temple Bar started with a circulation of about 30,000, and held its own successfully as it grew in months and years. I had a very strong staff, including Edmund Yates, whom I at once fixed upon as my sub-editor; one of the Miss Powers, a niece of the Countess of Blessington; Charles Kenney, of the *Times,* the son of the popular dramatist who wrote *Sweethearts and Wives;* Blanchard Jerrold, and T. H. Sotheby, who wrote some learned papers on ancient classical novelists. Another early contributor was Mr. Robert Buchanan. So far as I can recollect—and my memory does not often trip me up—Mr. Buchanan came one foggy evening to my chambers in Clement's Inn with a manuscript poem. Whether he brought me a letter of introduction I am unable to remember; but I find that Edmund Yates, in his "Memoirs," states that

the renowned poet came to him at his residence, in Abbey Road, with a letter of introduction from Mr. W. H. Wills, of *All the Year Round.* Still, I am persuaded that Mr. Buchanan *did* call on me; that I read his manuscript, and that I wrote to Edmund to say that, although I was no poet, I felt persuaded that in this youthful Scotch gentleman there was a mine of genius which only required working.

The fame which the poems and the dramas of Robert Buchanan has brought him, has vindicated, I think, the prediction which I made concerning him. But, strange to relate, I have never spoken to or even seen Mr. Robert Buchanan, to my knowledge, since the year 1860, as aforesaid. The first poem which he wrote for me was entitled, I think, "Temple Bar." Wiltshire Staunton Austin was another member of my staff. He was a most remarkable man; handsome, richly lettered, witty, humorous, and one of the readiest and most powerful speakers I have ever listened to. He was the son of a West Indian gentleman, a graduate of Oxford and a barrister of Lincoln's Inn. He managed, unhappily, to muddle away a life which was full of splendid promise, and died prematurely. I remember two brothers of his, both of whom I hope are alive and flourishing. One was Mr. Ware Austin, whom I heard of once as the editor of an Indian newspaper. The other, Mr. Charles Austin, an intimate friend of the late Lewis Wingfield, travelled extensively in Europe and in the United States, and was a constant correspondent of the *Times.*

I knew him but very slightly; and thereby hangs a tale for the truth of which I am not quite ready to vouch, but which I tell as it was told to me. Charles Austin was a frequent contributor to the *Saturday Review*, in which he once wrote a very slashing article castigating the young and aggressive *Daily Telegraph*. In those days our leading columns were rather too full of quotations from the classics; and of course the writer of the *Saturday* article, which was entitled "Jupiter Junior," took care to insinuate that all our classical allusions were stolen from Lemprière, or from the mottoes appended to the armorial bearings in "Burke's Peerage."

As I have said, my knowledge of Charles Austin was extremely limited; and on the few occasions that I met him he seemed to me a very shy and reserved person, to whom, moreover, the fact of his being in my company did not afford any gratification, but rather the contrary. Years afterwards Lewis Wingfield was talking to me about Charles Austin; and I expressed my admiration of his clear and vigorous style. "It is a pity," quoth poor Lewis, "that you two did not come together more frequently; but Austin has often said to me, 'That man will never forgive me for having written "Jupiter Junior" in the *Saturday Review*, and for having unmercifully demolished a leading article of his on Bottles.'" It so fortuned that I was as innocent of writing the article in question as I am of having murdered Eliza Grimwood, set the Thames on fire, or eaten the puppy pie under Marlow

Bridge. It was a pure matter of fancy on both sides. Charles Austin fancied that I did not like him, and I fancied that he did not like me.

But I must say a word more about the *Saturday*. To the first number of *Temple Bar* I only contributed the first of a series of papers, "Travels in the County of Middlesex," and an essay on the current year, called "Annus Mirabilis"; but in the second number I began a serial fiction, called "The Seven Sons of Mammon." By this time I had begun to be known. "Gaslight and Daylight," "Looking at Life," "Lady Chesterfield's Letters to Her Daughter," "How I Tamed Mrs. Cruiser," and other opuscules had made me somewhat popular, and brought me plenty of readers, plenty of reviewers, and from the majority of the last-named Christian friends plenty of virulent abuse. The *Saturday Review* followed the lead of the *Times* in reviling the "Journey Due North." I arose from the perusal of the *Saturday's* two-column invectives with the uneasy, although happily transient, impression that perhaps I *was*, after all, the ignoramus, the impostor, the plagiarist, and the blockhead that the *Saturday* seemed to think I was; and that I only needed courage to be a pickpocket or a smasher. To periodical streams of similar abuse in the columns, of the *Saturday* I was subjected from 1860 to 1867 by which period I had written between twenty-five and thirty books.

I have more than once hinted that I am afflicted with a very violent temper and my first impulse

when I read my *Saturday* at breakfast, and found the usually savage attack upon my writings, was to sit down and pen a polite note to the editor, at his office in Southampton Street, Strand, telling him that he was an anonymous coward, liar, and scoundrel. After a while I would bolt my breakfast, and then a slight solace would come in the shape of a fragrant Havana. That would be precisely my wife's opportunity. She had never said a word while I was raging at the *Saturday* and scribbling the wrathful letter; but when I had got about half-way through the regalia, she would say mildly, "Don't you think it's about time, dear, that you let the man go to the Devil?" and to the Devil accordingly did my letter to the *Saturday Review* go—that is to say, it went into the waste-paper basket in summer, and into the fire in winter.

Calmly reviewing in this the late evening of my life that which I have done in letters and in journalism, I have arrived at two very carefully decided conclusions: first, that the *Saturday Review* was in many respects quite justified in reviling me; and, next, that the animadversion of that able journal did me a great deal more good than harm. In fact, I fail to see that beyond the occasional exacerbations of temper caused by the abusive articles about myself which I perused, and the waste of a certain quantity of stationery in writing letters to the editor which I never posted, the hostility of the *Saturday Review* did me any harm at all.

I was earning at the time when it was wont most fiercely to attack me, say, in 1863, about two thousand a year; and I cannot remember, save when I was prostrated by sickness, to have earned since then a smaller annual income. Nor did the *Saturday* prevent me from acquiring a certain amount of popularity. Celebrated I never was, and celebrated I have never wanted to be; yet I have been as well known for many years past as Horniman's Tea or Thorley's Food for Cattle, or any much-advertised soap that you care to know of. The *Saturday* was equally mistaken as unjust in asserting that I was wholly destitute of humour and of learning; but it was quite right in accusing me of writing in a turgid, inflated, and bombastic manner. Style, the French philosopher has said, is the Man; and my style, from the English point of view, is and has always been incurably vicious. I was brilliantly educated; but half my education was imparted to me at a French public school, and the academy which I have described at Turnham Green; and the remainder I have acquired by rigid study, which will not be relaxed till I grow blind, or die. During the six years of my connection with Dickens on *Household Words*, I had to subdue my tendency to use words derived from the Latin instead of the Anglo-Saxon. As I have often said, I could speak French and Italian before I could speak English even tolerably; and it was only by the sternest of mental efforts that, while Dickens was my chief, I abstained as far as I could from using what

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, following Horace, used to call "sesquipedalian" words. Moreover, Dickens's young men were, to a certain extent, constrained to imitate the diction of their chief, and I fell in with the trick as deftly as perhaps my colleagues did.

But when I joined the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, and had a free hand in writing at least three thousand words every day, I soon relapsed into that style which so roused the ire of the *Saturday*. Out came, or, rather, streamed, the long-tailed words, the hyperboles, the rhodomontade, the similes, and the quotations dragged in by the head or by the heels. I knew, perhaps, but little; but I made as much as I could of what I knew. I was impatient, dogmatical, illogical, and could be, myself, from time to time aggressive and abusive. Many years afterwards, staying with Lord Rosebery at The Durdans, near Epsom, I found among the guests Sir William Vernon Harcourt; and in the course of after-dinner chat the present Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded to his former connection with the journal which used to hold me in such literary aversion. "Why," humorously observed Sir William, "at one time, Venables, Parson Scott, and I must have written more than half the *Saturday* between us." "Parson" Scott was a highly-respected and erudite clergyman, the father of Mr. Clement Scott, the dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*. Of course, I said nothing at The Durdans about the *Saturday's* dealings with me; still, I could not help wondering in my mind whether I had ever been indebted for one of the slashing reviews

in the *Saturday* to the pen, equally vigorous and graceful, of Sir William Vernon Harcourt.

I have often been asked why, when I was some thirty-five years of age, I should practically have abandoned literature for journalism. I quoted Coleridge just now. Read what the great philosopher has to say about literature in his "Table Talk":—"It would be a sort of irreligion, and scarcely less than a libel on human nature, to believe that there is any established and reputable profession or employment in which a man may not contrive to act with honesty and honour; and doubtless there is likewise none which may not at times present temptations to the contrary. But woefully will that man find himself mistaken who imagines that the profession of literature, or (to speak more plainly) the *trade* of authorship, besets its members with fewer or with less insidious temptations than the Church, the Law, or the different branches of commerce. Let literature be an honourable augmentation to your arms, but not fill the escutcheon." I knew perfectly well that I was altogether destitute of a particle of that genius without which I could never excel or become famous in pure letters; but, on the other hand, I was fully cognisant of the fact that I had learned my trade as a journalist, and that I could earn a handsome income by it.

I did not bid farewell to the Muses, as Blackstone did. I read with a greater avidity than ever; but I was content with studying all the books that I could get hold of, and to cease for the time being to write

any. Thus it was with deliberation that I devoted myself to the calling of journalism; and that calling I have followed in the columns of one daily paper for seven-and-thirty years. I have never put myself forward as a representative writer for the press. I am not even a member of the Institute of Journalists. I was subpœnaed once as a witness to speak as to newspaper custom in some litigation between the editor of a Yorkshire paper and its proprietor, who had dismissed him, as the editor thought, without sufficient notice. I went down very unwillingly to Leeds; but on the morning when the case was to come on, I sought out Mr. Waddy, Q.C., the counsel who was to examine me in the interest, I believe, of the plaintiff, and put the case clearly before him. "Look here, Mr. Waddy," I said; "I am about the last witness you should call to testify as to the Custom of journalism, for the reason that about that Custom I know absolutely nothing. With the great daily paper with which I have been connected for so many years, I have no kind of contract or engagement, and no settled salary. I am paid, and liberally paid, not by the week, month, or year, but by the piece. If the proprietors wish to get rid of me, they are free to say so to-morrow; and if I wish to retire from the *D. T.*, I have only to make my bow and take leave of Peterborough Court for ever." Mr. Waddy laughed; his junior, Mr. Atherly Jones, laughed; and with their concurrence I took the next train for London, and was not examined in the case at all.

Between my novel in *Temple Bar* and my daily task on the *Telegraph* I had plenty of work on my hands; still I had leisure to add an additional two hundred and fifty pounds a year to my income by writing a weekly column of literary and artistic gossip under the title of "Echoes of the Week," in the *Illustrated London News.* Shrewd Mr. Herbert Ingram had not forgotten our meeting on board the *Great Eastern;* and, at the secession, through ill health, of Peter Cunningham, F.S.A., who had hitherto been his purveyor of hebdomadal gossip, he asked me to write the column in question. Peter Cunningham was a character; the heartiest, kindest, cleverest soul that you could know and love. He was a son of that Allan Cunningham, marble-mason and poet, who was for so many years chief assistant in the studio of Sir Francis Chantrey, the sculptor, and who, in his later years, wrote a most amusing work, "The Lives of the English Painters." Peter, like my own dear brother Charles, was a Blue-coat boy; and he had another brother, who went out to India as a cadet, in the service of the East India Company. A long time after Peter's death I became acquainted with this brother, Colonel Francis Cunningham, an accomplished gentleman and elegant writer. I do not think that Peter went to the University; but when he was quite a young man one of his father's influential friends obtained for him a clerkship in the Audit Office at Somerset House.

There, as I suppose, he had plenty of leisure—

for Civil servants were not very severely worked in those days—his taste for antiquarian research became largely developed; and he was also an ardent student of the literature of the Georgian era, his proficiency in which last and delightful branch of study led to his being commissioned by Mr. John Murray, of Albemarle Street, to edit the Memoirs and Correspondence of Horace Walpole. These and many other kindred tasks he executed with surprising acumen and accuracy; but to my mind his *magnum opus* of research was "The Handbook for London," quite recently expanded and re-edited by Mr. Henry B. Wheatley, F.S.A., under the title of "London, Past and Present: Its History, Associations, and Traditions." With the aid of Cunningham, Wheatley, Loftie, and last, but not least, Cassell's "Old and New London," the "intelligent New Zealander" might with ease compose any number of metropolitan stories and essays without being at the pains of visiting England to sit on a potentially decayed London Bridge in order to sketch the equally hypothetical ruins of St. Paul's. Peter married Miss Zenobia Martin, the daughter of that extraordinary painter, John Martin, mezzotint engravings of whose grand scenes from Babylonian history and "Paradise Lost" used to fill my mind with astonishment when I was a boy.

Peter and I were great allies; and, without forming ourselves into a regular club, Blanchard Jerrold, Wiltshire Austin, Rudolph Gustavus Glover, of the

War Office, Joseph Charles Parkinson, then at the Audit Office, Vizetelly, Alfred Dickens, Inspecting Engineer of the Board of Health, a rare humorist and good fellow, Frederick Dickens, of the War Office (both brothers of the novelist), and myself,* used to dine three or four nights a week at certain favourite restaurants—Blanchard's, then in Beak Street; Giraud's, in Castle Street, Leicester Square; the "Solferino," in Rupert Street, Haymarket; and Stone's, in Panton Street. Poor Peter Cunningham's fortunes were wrecked over the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition. He was a consummate judge of art in its out-of-the-way phases, such as miniatures, enamels, carvings, and mediæval jewellery; and the Audit Office gave him six months' leave in order that he might assist the Executive Committee of the Exhibition with his valuable advice and experience. He could never get his neck back again into the collar of official routine; and, after awhile, he retired on a pension; threw up his journalistic engagements in London, and betook himself to the pretty town of St. Albans, in Hertfordshire; his companion being Frederick Dickens, who had also retired on a pension from the War Office, and John Reeve, the eldest son of the admirable low comedian, "Jack" Reeve."

The younger Reeve laboured under what I have

* The clerical staff of the great Public Department in Pall Mall has given numerous recruits to the ranks of literature. Among them I may mention Tom Hood, son of the author of "The Song of the Shirt," and Clement Scott Curious to remember that Leigh Hunt was, in his early adolescence, a clerk in the War Office.

always held to be a terrible social affliction. He had inherited a moderate but comfortable competence; he had nothing to do, and died practically of doing nothing. It was while Fred Dickens, with Peter and John Reeve, was residing at St. Albans, that he discovered that unwashed hermit, whose principal garment was a dirty blanket, secured at the throat by a skewer, who kept his cheque-book in a fish-kettle, and was accustomed to administer a small silver coin and a glass of gin to any wayfarer who could say his paternoster in Latin—the hermit was a Roman Catholic—and who was made by Charles Dickens the pivot on which the stories in "Tom Tiddler's Ground," one of the Christmas numbers of *All the Year Round*, revolved.

END OF VOL. I.

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